

The Nation and I

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The Nation and I

For the Reunification of the Motherland

Choe Dok Sin

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The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung receives Choe Dok Sin

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Preface

I am already 70. It seems only yesterday that I was romping about as a little boy in a small, secluded mountain village in the northern tip of Korea, but I am now in the twilight of my life.

To look back, it has been a life full of twists and turns. As a mere child I left my homeland and wandered a foreign country, in an effort to do something that I believed would be good for the country. I met many patriots and champions of the independence movement, and after liberation I served under a few people who professed themselves to be leaders. After leaving the motherland once again, I had frank discussions with overseas Koreans in America and Europe and then returned to the starting point of my life's journey in north Korea, where I saw the true realities of my homeland for myself.

What was it that I have been wandering in search of since my boyhood until today, when even my grey hair has become thin? It was the moral support that a people can rely on in their life, the true and upright principle of life and the path leading to the dignity and revival of the nation.

There is a saying that it takes a lifetime to learn how to live. Now I am confident that I have found the truth in quest of which I have roamed in such agony during my tortuous life's journey. Since I cannot afford to keep this truth to myself, I dare to take up my pen today looking upon the twilight of my life as its morning glow and recovering the spirit of my youth.

I would like neither to deceive nor to be deceived any longer. How foolishly did I dance to the loud calls and gay music of so many clowns and boasters and how enthusiastically did I shake the

empty drum like a witch?

But I resent none of this, nor do I rebuke myself. Because, though I was indeed to blame, it was rather an outcome of the vices overrunning every domain of our society where a pickpocket occupied the seat of power and a prostitute was placed on a cushion of gold.

What use is it now to denounce what has gone before and criticize past faults? No matter how earnestly one may discuss the things of yesterday, one will never retrieve a discharged arrow nor bring back one's past.

What matters is not yesterday, but today and the point where we are standing today. Still more important is tomorrow, which is the continuation of today and the point where we shall be standing tomorrow. Therefore, it seems that our duty at present is to reflect on today and to ponder over tomorrow. What we must consider is the situation that faces our nation today.

Born in this land and belonging to this nation, how can we stand aloof from its fate even for a moment? My prosperity is decided within the limits of the vicissitudes of the nation and our joys and sorrows are conditioned by its fortune and distress. So each one of us is no more than a drop in the ocean that is the nation.

Herein lies the reason why I am trying to discuss anew the principle of life which will live for ever with the nation. I won't repent of my past actions. Even if I do not mention them, my services and my sins will stand as facts. I will not offer to admonish nor chide anyone, because I think that is not in my nature.

All I want is to talk with the readers about the principle of national life I have come to understand, quietly and in a serene state of mind. There is a saying that a man should be appraised when the lid is nailed down on his coffin. So I consider it most important that a man should know how to live the later years of his life. I have made up my mind to eliminate everything of the past and start a new life to serve my nation faithfully. My sole wish is to devote all the remaining years of my life to the promotion of the truth I have discovered.

I shall be very happy if this humble book of mine proves of any help to the readers and I pay my respects, as a member of this

nation, to my father and other noble champions of the independence movement and to our anti-Japanese patriotic forerunners who dedicated their whole lives to the solemn cause of the independence of the country and the people and, at the same time, extend my wholehearted thanks to my compatriots in south Korea who are waging a devoted struggle today for democracy and national salvation regardless of personal sacrifices and to my fellow countrymen in the north who have made our Korea a great nation which enjoys considerable prestige throughout the world.

April 1983
Choe Dok Sin

National Distress and My Fate

A Man of a Ruined Nation

I was born a child of a ruined nation. Rather, I was destined to be a man without a homeland even before my birth, because I saw the light of day in 1914, four years after the annexation of Korea by Japan.

In olden times people said that if a baby gives a loud cry when it comes into this world, it is in anticipation of a hard life ahead. This probably applies to me. Born a stateless man, only a thorny path lay before me.

My infant soul was greeted by a lightless sky and a colonial land, grief-stricken mountains and rivers, the hot blood spilt in the Imo Military Revolt (1882) and the Kabo Peasant War (1894) and the misery of the Righteous Volunteers' Army who had fallen, crying out for independence. The Koreans, groaning under the agony of national ruin, were being increasingly ill-treated beneath the lash of the Japanese aggressors. Robbed of their country, our people crossed the Sea of Hyonhae or trudged off to northern Jiandao like flocks of birds driven away from their nests.

The nationwide March First Movement was logical outcome of such developments. This represented the explosion of the pent-up national indignation against the Japanese imperialist aggressors and an eruption of the unsuppressible national spirit to repulse oppression and win back the country. The March First Movement was put down bloodily by the cruel armed force of Japanese imperialism, but the blood shed by the nation was by no means in

vain. Through this resistance the masses grew in strength and learnt a lesson in their failure.

As a result, the anti-Japanese national-liberation movement entered a new phase of development: the broad masses appeared as the main force of the movement and the stage of the struggle was reaching to the vast continent beyond the borders of the country. A lot of educated people and hot-blooded young men surged into China.

Of course, still in my infancy, I could neither perceive nor understand this movement of the times. But it did not pass by my home.

My father who was already involved in the independence movement, followed the drift to China and in 1921, at the age of seven, I, too, left my birthplace (Ryongun-ri, Wolhwa Sub-county, Uiju County, North Pyongan Province) where my youthful ambitions had been nourished, for Beijing where my father had gone.

I was broken-hearted to see my youngest maternal aunt, who walked a long way to see me off, saying with tear-filled eyes "Farewell, Jong Ho!" (Jong Ho was my infant name). I had spent most of my childhood at the home of my mother's parents. My father was away from home a lot. So, my mother and I used to live at her old home. My mother's youngest sister was very kind to me; she brought me up and cared for me. I was very fond of her. I never forgot her kind eyes and soft voice.

After finishing the short course established by Son Byong Hui, the third founder of Chondoism, to teach the doctrine of Chondoism, my father Choe Dong O had returned home and set up a private school. This was aimed at educating the children of Chondoists. Probably this was the start of my father's involvement in the independence movement.

At the time of the March First Movement in 1919, my father read the declaration of independence and shouted hurrah, together with my maternal uncle Choe Song Ryon, a leading practitioner of Chondoism in Uiju, and was arrested and put in Uiju Prison by the Japanese police. Upon his release from prison he sought refuge in China. He took charge of working with the independence fighters at

home as a representative of Chondoism in the Provisional Government in Shanghai.

At the time of my visit to Beijing, my father was conducting missionary work among Korean refugees through the chapel of Chondoism he had set up, at the same time as devoting his efforts to inspiring national consciousness and a sense of unity in their hearts.

In this way, my life in an alien land started in Beijing, a life that was interwoven with the trials and sorrows of a homeless people.

The situation in China in those days was very complicated. Japan, having annexed Korea, had hurled her army into Manchuria and threatened even the Chinese mainland. But, instead of resisting the Japanese aggressors, the Chinese nation was torn between factions and suffered from internal dissension. The Zhang Zuolin warlords in Manchuria and General Wu Peifu, who took up his position in Beijing, fought each other across the boundary formed by Shanhaiguan. The latter was defeated due to the betrayal by General Feng Yuxiang, his chief of staff. When Jiang Jieshi made a triumphal entry into Beijing at the head of his northward expeditionary army, the Feng Yuxiang warlords went over to him. After Zhang Zuolin was killed by a bomb, his son Zhang Xueliang maintained the military rule in Manchuria. In fact, the situation reminded people of Luo Guanzhong's novel *Chronicles of the Three States of Ancient China*.

Through attending primary school in Beijing, I came to recognize for the first time that I was a man of a ruined nation and what was meant by the phrase "ruined nation."

One day I happened to read some large letters written on a wall, "A man from a ruined nation is more miserable than a dog in a mourner's house!"

I interpreted the words one by one and rushed home with my face burning. It seemed to me that the words had been written to mock me. I was mortified and indignant. So I told this to my father. He said that the words had been put there by the Chinese with a view to rousing the people to resist the Japanese army that had intruded into Manchuria.

But, at any rate, I was a ruined man who could not rid himself of his trials and misery.

“Father, I dislike being a ruined man. When do you think we can return to our homeland?”

He looked serious, and replied:

“As soon as our country gains its independence.”

I asked quickly: “When will that be?”

He gave me a blank look before answering in a faint voice:

“Well... in about five years...”

Later I became aware that his reply was simply to soothe me, an innocent child.

It was probably at this time that I came to keenly sense the fate of a ruined nation and feel indignant and rebellious. I began to perceive, albeit vaguely, a thorny path being laid ahead of me.

So, I obeyed my father when he asked me to enter the Xiangshan orphanage whilst he moved the theatre of his activity to Manchuria and sent my mother back to our home. He told me: “You should experience hardship. This is necessary so that you can understand better the sorrow of a stateless people.”

The Xiangshan orphanage in Beijing provided a home for many children who had been orphaned by the drought and flooding that were annual occurrences around the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. I, though not an orphan, lived together with them. I believed that this was also ordained by my fate of being stateless. I studied at the Xiangshan orphanage until my father summoned me. I left for Huadian County, Jilin Province in the summer of 1930.

I felt lonely in the horse cart as I crossed the vast empty plain of Huadian County having left the crowded train. The trip along a country road reminded me of the scenery of my homeland. I missed my mother and her old home and her sister. I wondered how my mother was getting along back home and if she still wept alone every night, thinking of my little sister who had died in Beijing.

I wished to go home. But I remembered what my father had said, that unless the country was independent we could not return.

What could I do to return to my home? In that cart, I thought only of this.

In Huadian I was greeted warmly by both my parents. I had imagined that my mother would be at our home, but she had come

to Huadian a long time before. I still remember as though it were only yesterday my mother, looking at me with tear-filled eyes and comforting me, saying that it must have been difficult for me being alone all that time and that we should not be separated from each other again, but always stay together.

At the time of my return to my parents, my father, who had once been headmaster of the Hwasong Uisuk School which was established by nationalist fighters in order to train the cadres of the Independence Army, was working with our compatriots in close contact with the nationalist fighters in the Jilin area, in a shop called "Uisan Chemist."

I was told later that when my father was head of the Hwasong Uisuk School, student Kim Song Ju (later General Kim Il Sung) attended the school for a short time.

I did not stay in Huadian for long, but went to Jilin to be enrolled at the Wenguang Middle School. This school, too, had reportedly felt the influence of student Kim Song Ju, who had been waging revolutionary activities at the Yuwen Middle School.

After August 15 liberation my parents told me about General Kim Il Sung in his days at the Hwasong Uisuk School. But I would like to deal with this later.

The September 18 Incident occurred when I was a pupil at the Wenguang Middle School. At that time, I was once again to feel deeply the sorrow of a stateless nation.

In those days Manchuria was under the rule of Zhang Xueliang, son of Zhang Zuolin. The latter had been killed in Huanggutun by a bomb planted on his train by the Japanese, as he travelled from Shanhaiguan to Fengtien.

At this time the Japanese had their Kwantung Army stationed in Manchuria on the pretext of protecting the south Manchurian railways. On September 18, 1931 they suddenly occupied defenceless Fengtien, falsely accusing that "The Zhang Xueliang army attacked the Kwantung Army." Following this, in a short time they had swallowed the whole of Manchuria, including Jilin Province. Japan set Fuui, son of the last Emperor of the Qing dynasty, on the throne and established puppet Manchukuo.

At the same time, she was extending her claws of aggression

onto the Chinese mainland.

The September 18 Incident represented another trying ordeal for the two million Koreans in Manchuria, most of whom lived in the Jiandao district.

The Japanese troops arrested independence fighters and sent them to Japan or shot them on the spot, and oppressed Korean compatriots in a very harsh way. Many people belonging to the higher levels of the nationalist movement went to the Chinese mainland to avoid the brutal treatment at the hands of the Japanese army. They believed that although China was being beaten, it would rise up and fight the Japanese army some day, and then they intended to wage the anti-Japanese struggle in company with the Chinese. At that time my father, too, left for Shanhaiguan.

One day I went out into the streets of Jilin and stopped in front of a small shop. A young man squatting on his haunches in the shop greeted me with a little smile. Looking closely at him, I discovered that he was a slight acquaintance of mine who at times had visited my father, expressing a desire to take part in the independence movement. When I looked into the store, I was surprised to see several people lying on the dirty wooden bed, smoking morphine.

The young man stuttered out an apology:

“Things have gone like this... Judging from the fact that Japan has conquered even Manchuria and the Chinese surrendered without resistance..., winning our independence seems in the distant future and hopeless. So, I am doing business of this sort to eke out a living...”

So there it was. Frightened by the might of the Japanese army, quite a few people had lost any hope of independence or had degenerated and become turncoats. This young man's degeneration, too, represented a phase in the suffering of a stateless people.

The situation was becoming more perilous. The cunning Japanese had manoeuvred to weaken the opposition forces by driving a wedge between the Chinese and Korean peoples. To this end, the enemy conducted deceitful propaganda among the Chinese to the effect that “Koreans are playing a vanguard role.” This implied that Koreans were serving as the puppets of Japan in its invasion of China.

In fact, this was a scheme aimed to annihilate our nation by attacking it from all sides. The situation was extremely critical. Our nation was literally hovering between life and death. My heart was rent at the thought of the anguish of the nation.

At that time, I was resolved to dedicate myself to the independence movement in order to free myself from the colonial yoke and not to see the younger generation suffering the fate of stateless people as I had done.

Someone who leads the life of a slave can pass on to his children nothing but the fate of a slave.

It is inevitable that freemen give birth to freemen and those who meekly accept the fate of a slave, slaves.

So man bears a heavy social and family responsibility not only as a member of the society of his country, but also as a member of a family.

They say that a man would rather die than live in slavery. But what would be the purpose of dying? What is important is to fight to the end to rid oneself of the fate of a stateless person.

Let us save our nation from colonial enslavement. Let us achieve freedom and independence.

This is the lesson my parents taught me during our life in exile, and a conclusion I formed through the experience I accumulated in the period from infancy to boyhood.

Wandering Patriotism

People often say that the greatest sorrow is the sorrow of hunger.

This is right. So, there is a saying which goes: "If a tiger does not eat for three days, it does not mind even a magistrate." What this means is that if someone goes hungry for three days, he becomes unscrupulous in thought and deed.

I had little experience of hunger, but that is not to say that I grew up not knowing what the sorrow of hunger was. In Beijing where we had to live on about half a pound of wheat flour a day, my little sister died of malnutrition, and when I was attending the military academy in Nanjing, my large family had to live on my

salary of 10 yuan.

I still remember the taste of the one bowlful of rice I ate when I travelled from Beijing to Jilin to meet my father. It was the first time I had eaten boiled rice and I ate it to stave off the pangs of hunger I felt at missing meals during the long journey.

But however great the sorrow of hunger is, it cannot compare with the sorrow of being stateless, because the former can be relieved occasionally but the latter does not go away even for a moment. A European poet wrote that "One who wanders in foreign land feels breathless when ascending even the lowest stairs and even his bread tastes bitter." People who are deprived of their country and banished from it feel a lump in the throat when they eat and have to sing with tears in their eyes.

To banish this sorrow I made up my mind to become a soldier. I was resolved to join the fight, rifle in hand, to win the independence of the country.

In 1934, at the age of 20, I changed "Jong Ho," my infant name, into "Dok Sin," and entered the Central Military Academy in Nanjing through this or that channel. Reproached by the Japanese for "assembling wicked Korean students," the then nationalist Government of China, whose diplomacy was based on putting up with affronts from Japan, bent to its pressure and got the Korean students who entered the military academy to change their names into Chinese ones.

After much thought, I changed my name from Choe Jong Ho to Choe Dok Sin. I decided to change only my christian name to Dok Sin because the surname Choe existed in Chinese. I conceived this idea myself. In Komungol, my home village, there was a refreshing crystal spring called Doksu. In summer, whenever the villagers came back from the fields, they would all drink a bowlful of the spring water to cool themselves. In this way they would forget the harshness of their life for just a moment. I accompanied the grown-ups and played around Doksu. Doksu was the symbol of my home village. I badly missed my home village as those who have left their home always do. I could not control the heartbreaking sorrow of having to change even my childhood name scented with the aroma of my home village. So, I decided to add to my name just the character Dok from Doksu of my home village. This was because in

changing my name to a Chinese one, I wished to cherish in my mind just a part of my home village.

In this way I became a cadet at the Chinese military academy. Because I worked hard, I was considered as one of the best students.

After graduating from the Central Military Academy in June 1936, I became Chinese army officer Choe Dok Sin, and was posted as a German translator to the translation office under the military commission of the nationalist government.

In those days the Jiang Jieshi nationalist government advocated the maintenance of internal security above resistance to the enemy from outside and concentrated its efforts not on opposing Japan but on establishing peace in the country through anti-communist measures.

Taking advantage of this weakness in the nationalist government, the Japanese army extended its power as far as North China and crossed the Great Wall, advancing towards the heart of China.

Finally, on July 7, 1937 the Japanese army triggered off the Sino-Japanese War and occupied Beijing within 20 days and seized Nanjing, the capital of the nationalist government, in December.

The Provisional Government in Shanghai had moved to Nanjing to escape the oppression of the Japanese army but had been gone to Chongqing via Changsha, Hunan Province.

One day I met an acquaintance of mine from the Provisional Government in the street in Chongqing. He told me that the Provisional Government had had a hard time finding an office for itself after moving to Chongqing, and that after a great deal of effort it had rented an old building. I looked in the direction he indicated and saw a small, shabby-looking two-storeyed building. At that moment I felt heart sick and asked myself: "Is this really the building of the Provisional Government which represents our country?"

"I think you could redeem your honour if you at least hang out our flag instead of grumbling about the building," I said. At this he gave me a forlorn look and said that the nationalist government would not allow it.

I could not help feeling respect for them; even in such difficult

circumstances under which they lacked the active support of the nationalist government and Japan was expanding her influence on the continent, they did not despair of the future, did not lose their belief that even though they could die of hunger like Boyi and Shuqi, our nation would revive some day, and were resolved to live out the stormy years. I, too, felt lonely. I was overcome with sadness when I was told about and saw the true condition of the Provisional Government and I asked myself, wasn't there some place in this world where we could live in peace? Wasn't there a place where our patriotism could take root, bloom and bear fruit?

In those days I had a lot of free time.

I was transferred from the translation office under the military commission to the 38th Division of the Neo-1st Army and then appointed chief of the propaganda section of the Korean National Liberation Army.

As for the Korean National Liberation Army it has been mentioned in deceased Chang Jun Ha's *Stone Pillow* and other people have also dealt with it. So I would like to tell of some of my personal experiences. Finance and other matters arising in running the army were under the control of the military commission of the nationalist government and its top posts were held by Chinese.

At that time the supreme commander of the army was General Li Chong Chon, but such important offices as the chief of the general staff and the chief of political instruction, to say nothing of the post of the chief of staff, were held, of course, by Chinese. And because a Korean had to be appointed as chief of the propaganda section at the political instruction office, the military commission of the nationalist government recommended me.

I had to take an examination. It was to write a composition under the title *The Ambition of the Chief of the Propaganda Section*. After thinking for a while I wrote on the paper: "I am not qualified to be chief of the propaganda section since, although I am a Korean, my Korean is poor and I know only Chinese." I was not very keen to become chief of the propaganda section because I had a rough idea of the state of the Korean National Liberation Army.

I was told later that three people, including myself, sat for the examination, and I passed unexpectedly. Actually it was ridiculous.

Perhaps, the fact that I passed the examination can be explained because I was recommended by the Chinese side.

I was appointed as chief of the propaganda section, but no one assigned me any task and also there was nothing to do. It would not be wrong to say that the general headquarters of the Liberation Army was just killing time. The soldiers of the Korean National Liberation Army wore Chinese military uniforms and cap badges of the Chinese army and not only had they never undergone military training or political instruction, but also they were unarmed.

There was only one thing which I did as chief of the propaganda section of the Korean National Liberation Army. It was to write a propaganda article in Chinese and submit it to the military commission of the Chinese government with the approval of General Li Chong Chon. Even a propaganda article could not be published without the approval of the Chinese government. Only when it was approved by the military commission could it be translated into Korean and used.

But my article was not approved until I gave up the post of chief of the propaganda section.

I decided to return to the 38th Division of the Neo-1st Army, to which I had once been attached. In those days this division was fighting in the northern part of Burma. I was determined to be at the forefront of the anti-Japanese struggle.

Li Bom Sok asked me to call on him, and he told me that he had been appointed as the leader of the 2nd Detachment of the Liberation Army in Xian and asked me to accompany him, in the position of second-in-command of the detachment.

Because this was not a matter for me to decide on my own, I consulted my father. At the time my father was a member of the legislature of the Provisional Government and held an important post within the Korean Revolutionary Party. Together with Kim Gyu Sik, Yu Dong Ryol, Kim Bong Jun and Hong Jin, he was working hard to unite those taking part in the nationalist movement.

His reply to my question was: "I think you must make up your mind. But looking to the future, it is no bad thing to gain combat experience. So it is best for you to return to your unit."

So I resigned the post of chief of the propaganda section of the

Korean National Liberation Army and left for the 38th Division. My heart was beating at the mere thought of fighting the Japanese army, our inveterate enemy, at first hand.

Although after leaving the Xiangshan orphanage and military academy I had become an officer with a resolve to win back the independence of my country and redeem the sorrow of a ruined people, I had been spending my time in restlessness, not knowing where to dedicate my young heart. But I believed that now the time had come at last. If I could lay down my life on the battlefield to defeat the Japanese army, no matter what front and unit I might be sent to, it would be a step on the road to independence, the road to patriotism. Full of youthful ardour I spent day and night dedicated to the anti-Japanese struggle as a divisional staff officer, instructor and battalion commander in the Chinese army.

In an action to retake a supply route in Yunnan Province we pushed our way over Mt. Yeren, covered with primeval forest, for over a month, cutting down trees and turning cannon wheels in the scorching heat of 120° F. I experienced fierce fighting in Nankan and in the Laxiao battle. I jumped into the flooded river at the risk of my life to fight the Japanese soldiers.

Whilst fighting for nearly two years in the Indo-Burma border area I felt the pride of being a frontline soldier and experienced the pleasant thrill of striking a blow for my country and routing the Japanese army.

The summer of 1945 was very hot. Our unit assembled at Nanning in Guangxi Province and in accordance with a new combat order, we started an advance towards Guangdong Province. We rested in the daytime to avoid the heat and at night we marched without rest.

One day during the march, I received the unexpected news that Japan had surrendered. I greeted the liberation of my country at the tip of the continent hundreds of thousands of *ri* away from the homeland. At this glad news, I was elated, but at the same time I felt a chill in my heart. The homeland was too far away and I was not with my fellow countrymen with whom I could dance and cheer. Only the officers and soldiers of the unit with whom I had shared life and death in the anti-Japanese war congratulated me, saying: "Your country has been liberated."

Afterwards, I experienced the same feelings when I entered Guangzhou in triumph.

I was entrusted with the tasks of accepting the surrender of the Japanese troops in Guangdong Province and of disarming them. For a member of the nation that had been deprived of its land by these people, this was indeed a satisfaction and a pleasure. I bustled about inexhaustibly. I disarmed the Japanese troops and put them in POW camps. I was a victor.

Like a triumphant general I entered Guangzhou on an Australian horse. The battalion with which I had fought the bloody anti-Japanese war was following me in procession. Amongst the people welcoming us there were overseas compatriots with Korean national flags in their hands. The scene touched my heart more deeply. I looked behind me. The officers and men of my battalion were marching, smiles all over their faces. They were all my young Chinese friends.

At that moment it occurred to me that many of these people welcoming us might regard me as Chinese. I had a strange feeling of being something like a sea gull that was wandering without nationality.

“...A miserable, solitary sea gull, for whom and where did you flap your wings in such pain?”

However, the word “liberation” filled me with elation and an uncontrollable excitement, so I had no time to ponder deeply.

At the Anti-Communist Front

For me, April 16, 1946 was a memorable day. Spring was deepening on the continent. On this spring day I, a young man of 32, embarked on a 5,000-ton Japanese freighter at Guangdong, in China in order to return to my country which I had left at the age of seven.

It can be said that in life the course mapped out at its starting point decides one's fate. If one goes astray by just an inch in taking the first step, this will lead one to somewhere unexpected in the end. That is why everyone wants to minimize their mistakes or eradicate any directional error made at the starting point, I believe.

But why is everything so vague, obscure and hazy at its starting point, yet so clear once it is done? In the case of physical exercise or entertainment, one can restart it or wait for other chances to do it. But in the course of life, what is past cannot be brought back and started again from the beginning. So, whether one is aware of it or not, every moment of a man's life is a conclusion.

For this reason, in order to ensure good results without committing blunders, a man needs a mentor and a teacher and, moreover, the nation needs a veteran leader.

Today, whenever I think of my life, I reflect on the directional mistake I made at its starting point.

That spring day in Guangdong seems to me to have been a starting point of my life. Of course, when I examine it closely, I can reverse my actions and regard that certain point in time as it. So, that day in April can be regarded as a restarting point from which to progress towards the remaining half of my life, reviewing the previous half. I think that in this sense, too, that day was truly one starting point of my life.

Then, did the misguided direction of my life begin at that very starting point in Guangdong? This is a difficult question. So it is better not to hurry over on answer. Firstly, I should look back on what had gone before and take stock of it.

In those days the liberated country was already divided into the north and the south by outside forces and they were taking different courses in thought and social system. Accordingly, there lay two roads before the overseas compatriots who were to return to the dear homeland and rid themselves of a hard life in an alien land. One was to go to the southern part of the country which lay below the 38th parallel and the other, the northern part.

I chose the former. I would prefer not to reach a conclusion in haste about whether the misguided direction of my life began from this choice or not. But, in truth, at that time I had not the experience to choose between the two. Anyway, in the situation that prevailed in those days I was unaware of even the fact that there were two ways lying ahead of me. That there were two ways is a historical fact of which I gradually became conscious and confirmed over the years. However, in those days I did not and

could not see any other road than the one to the south. It was the way which was destined for me. It was the only way, whose choice was decided by everything—the days I had passed up to that moment, the life I experienced and what I had seen, heard and known ever since my birth.

A ship bound for the homeland put to sea. She was an outdated freighter, but the voyage filled my heart with joy.

The ship carried more than 3,000 male and female compatriots. They were made up of young people who had been brought to China and southeast Asia and press-ganged into the Japanese army, labour camp internees who had suffered forced labour, and those who had suffered an inhuman insult as the so-called volunteer corps members. At that time, as a colonel of the Chinese army, I acted as their captain and embarked at their head.

I had spent the long period of 25 years in an alien land whose mountains, rivers and even villages were unfamiliar and was now leaving it. I was going home reflecting on half of my life splashed with the bitter tears of a ruined people. Standing with my arms at my side on the deck enjoying the fresh sea breeze, I felt as though the boundless ocean was my own possession and a limitless future that had unrolled before me had turned into a wave of flowers of hope to greet me.

There was no time to look back upon the past. All that rose before my mind was the liberated country and the life that was to be unfolded in the future.

The motherland asks me:

Have you led a worthy life for my good?

Of course.

Haven't you ever forgotten my suffering?

Not for even a moment.

What have you done for me?

What have I done? I rushed east and west on the Chinese mainland and finally disarmed the Japanese troops in Guangdong Province. Do you know who it was who picked out the passengers on this ship from amongst the POWs imprisoned by the Japanese army through negotiation with the Chinese side? And do you know

Mt. Yaren on the border between China and Burma? Did you see the skeletons piled on that mountain? All who went into the jungle became skeletons. The mountain which people can enter alive but never leave even after death is Mt. Yaren. But we crossed that mountain to strike the Japanese. Wasn't this for the good of the country?

Who do you mean by "we"?

The Chinese troops.

The last word is somewhat lame. I try to defend myself. Didn't I fight on the front line of the war against Japan with a gun in my hand? This was my greatest pride. How gallant I was, compared to those who had only seen how the wind blew and had not fired a single shot before returning home!

At any rate, I did fight. There was no other way for me than to fight under the circumstances that prevailed at the time.

Those were my thoughts on that ship. I did not doubt in the least that I would be greeted joyfully in the homeland. But my heart beat faster at the thought of what job I should take upon my return home.

One day my fellow traveller Kim, formerly the chairman of the Korean residents association in Guangdong, asked me what business I wanted to go into after I returned home.

"I want to become the garrison commander in Pusan in order to guard against Japan."

I had entertained strong antipathy towards Japan from childhood. Although this was my reply to him then, I hoped in my heart to do greater things. I replied in this simple way because Kim was pro-Japanese.

One day there was a disturbance on board. A man who had served as a warder at the labour camps was discovered amongst the passengers and the former labour camp members were about to finish him off, denouncing him as a puppet of the Japanese.

This was only natural. He had served the Japanese and committed crimes. So he should be made to pay for it. Moreover, I was told that among us there were several others who had acted as warders. I couldn't leave the matter alone.

I announced:

“The lapdogs of the Japanese should duly be punished. Their crimes are grave because they served the Japanese as warders and perpetrated all manner of outrages on our compatriots who were drafted to the labour camps. But now that the country has been liberated, laws will be formulated and trials staged in order to punish traitors. So the warders should not be killed here.”

My announcement was just, so it was effective. I myself believed in what I said.

It did not take many hours to see how my expectations and beliefs could be smashed in an instant. The moment I set foot on the homeland, I had a keen sense of standing in a castle in the air.

Our ship finally arrived in Pusan harbour on May 1st, 1946, 16 days after its departure from China. But a cholera epidemic had broken out on board the ship, so we had to stay at sea for further 18 days.

On May 18, the US army authorities summoned me to their office. It was all very strange. It was nearly a year since liberation and we had now returned to our motherland, but we were received not by our fellow countrymen but by foreign soldiers. The country was then already divided by the 38th parallel, with Soviet soldiers stationed in the north and US troops in the south. It was the US military government that summoned me. This was the prologue to the tragedy of national division and I had the ominous foreboding that I was to experience ordeals again.

The man who received me at the US army harbour commandant's office was not, of course, the harbour commandant himself, nor even an officer, but a US army master sergeant, and he was not an American but an American-born Japanese. At the time I felt very resentful that as a colonel I had to meet him. But this was just a prelude. The American master sergeant arrogantly pointed to the chair in front of his desk. It was a mute order that demanded that I should be seated. I was seized by a fit of rage, but wait and see was what I thought.

He interrogated me about various matters. It was more a case of inquiring into my life than an interview. This lasted an hour and then he let me know the directives of the US military government

concerning Koreans returning home from abroad, according to which they could be admitted into the country as private citizens only in the capacity of refugees, with no regard to his or her social standing. Only then did I realize how things stood under the US military government, something which I had known only by hearsay. I forfeited a pistol and 500 dollars which I had brought from China as a fee to the US military government.

My Chinese military uniform and badge of rank were left intact, probably because the attitude they assumed was not to admit, but ignore them.

I left the harbour commandant's office and returned to the repatriation ship only to find that over 3,000 returnees had been landed and gone. Only an empty ship awaited me. The one returnee who was still there spoke as follows:

"No sooner had you left the ship than the GIs came here and gave each of them one thousand *won* before making them disembark and leave."

Everything was done according to a plan drawn up by the US military government.

For a long time I stood on the wharf, unable to control my feelings of being maltreated and burning indignation. I was more a soldier who had returned in defeat from the war than a victorious officer. That was how I was being treated. The motherland, nay, the US military government was treating me as such. This was an overt manifestation of the cruel reality that in our liberated country there was no other political power than the US military government.

Just a short time before, more than 3,000 home-coming compatriots had been in an ecstasy of joy at the thought of being embraced by the liberated homeland and the young people among them were so proud, saying that their parade in Seoul would shake the street. Their faces floated in my mind's eye for a long time. That night I was standing lonely in a street in Pusan with my mind blank, when a queer melody reached my ears:

...

Believe not in America.

Japanese rise up again.

Koreans must take care.

What did it mean? Trudging on, I felt a keen awareness that the US army was forcing its military government on south Korea and lording it over our nation, with no recognition of our national sovereignty, like an army of occupation staying in a defeated country.

I went up to Seoul and found that things were just the same there: everything was under the control of the US military government.

The case of Li Bom Sok was even more deplorable. I was told that immediately after the August 15 liberation when the US army had not yet arrived he was landed at the airfield on Yoi Island together with an American intelligence officer of the rank of colonel by a US military aircraft.

However, the US army commander General Hodge, who was expected to control the territory south of the 38th parallel, did not allow them to enter. I was told that he entrusted the defeated Japanese army with the maintenance of public order until the US troops had advanced into south Korea, and got the remnants of that army to prevent the entry of the two. This was really disgraceful. If at that time Li Bom Sok had been more stubborn and shouted at them "You rascals! Why do you obstruct me? I am returning to my homeland," the news might have spread to Seoul and changed the situation. But I could not help laughing when I was told that the chief of the general staff of the Korean National Liberation Army gave in to the defeated Japanese army and flew back to Shanghai. Without doubt, he and I are stupid men.

It is common knowledge that any newly-emergent country which has rid itself of colonial rule should achieve its sovereignty and independence and build a new state with the forces of national liberation which waged the bloody struggle for national independence under the colonial rule at the centre and on the basis of its revolutionary traditions and thought.

However, in our land south of the 38th parallel there was no force capable of putting up a brave fight against the outrages of the United States which denied the political sovereignty of the Korean nation by declaring that there could be nothing other than the US military government.

I spent days on end sorely afflicted in my mind. I had to do something. I couldn't simply idle away my time. Should I enter upon a political career and help my father who had returned home from abroad? Or should I devote myself to building up the army with the experience I had gained in my life in the army in China? After much thought, I decided to join the south Korean guards force. After leaving the military academy as a third-term graduate, I was commissioned as a second lieutenant. The US military government, whilst awarding former officers of the Japanese and the puppet Manchukuo armies the ranks they had held at the end of the war, obliged those of us who had served in the Chinese army to pass through the military academy, in complete disregard of the military ranks we had formerly held. Therefore, when I, a former colonel of the Chinese army, was commissioned as a second lieutenant after graduating from the military academy, those who had held the rank of captain in the Japanese or puppet Manchukuo army had already been promoted to colonel. It was a really ludicrous situation.

In truth I could not but be outraged at the fact that they discriminated so unreasonably against former soldiers from China, one of the Allies, whilst showing special courtesy towards those who had served in the defeated enemy army and those who should have been punished as war criminals for their treachery to the nation and faithful service to the enemy.

The same was true in the political world. Those who had collaborated with the Japanese were strutting about unpunished, with no qualms of conscience. I had believed that when the country was liberated punishment would be meted out to the traitors who had collaborated with the Japanese. But, on the contrary, those who had fought against Japan were treated coolly. I smiled bitterly when I thought of those who had demanded excitedly on the ship to finish off the warders. But with the lapse of time I was drawn into a vortex of life in which I carried such discontent buried in my mind. I was beginning to get used to an atmosphere of life that was full of contradictions before I was even conscious of it.

That is how my military career in south Korea started. But what matters here is that this explains why ultimately I was to stand at the forefront of anti-communism.

As early as my active service in the Chinese nationalist army, I had undergone anti-communist brainwashing and, upon my return home, I carried not only the badge of rank and military uniform of a Chinese nationalist army officer, but also the anti-communist idea. Although I had no clear idea about communism, I was steeped in the knowledge that communism and nationalism could not coexist.

Realizing that the confrontation between the north and south was growing serious following liberation, I resigned myself to the whirlwind of anti-communism. Besides, I was told that pseudo-communist Pak Hon Yong, the self-styled Lenin of Korea, predicted that Korea would become a state of Russian-style socialist proletarian dictatorship and, in the long run, satellite republic of the Soviet Union.

As the days went by, I came to be more closely wedded to the idea that communism and nationalism were incompatible.

It is said that recollection is a beautiful thing. This is probably because in retrospect one can look back with a smile on something which one did in tears. Even if one did something undesirable, one may simply remember it with a laugh, thinking to oneself, "Oh, I made such a mistake then." But the reverse is true with me, because I cannot help recollecting with sorrow the path I trod with pleasure.

Although it is unpleasant for me to touch on a sore more than once, I would like to make a few remarks concerning my role at the forefront of anti-communism.

I heard the news of the outbreak of the Korean war in the United States.

After finishing the senior course at US infantry training college, Colonel Choe Hong Hui, and I, in order to see the United States, travelled by bus on the transcontinental road which runs from the east to the west coasts in the southern part of the country. On the way, we stayed overnight in San Antonio, Texas, and on the morning of June 25 the radio reported "War has broken out in Korea." We did not know what was happening. Only after reading a newspaper the next day did we believe that it was true. The newspaper said, "There is hostility around the 38th parallel."

"How can we enjoy a leisurely journey when war has broken

out?” So we thought. However, it was impossible for us to make immediate changes to the itinerary of our journey. On July 10, when we arrived in San Francisco, we caught a US military plane. We reached Taejon on July 14, but the army headquarters had already moved to Taegu. So we went there and reported for duty.

My first combat action was to stage the defence of the Yongdok line, commanding the 23rd regiment, the 3rd division, on the east coast. Since I had been commander of the 3rd division before going to the United States, the 23rd regiment was under my command. But because things were not well with the regiment, I was entrusted with taking command of its operations. The task I was assigned for the second time was to go to Andong as the chief of staff of the 1st army corps and lead it across the Rakdong River so as to build a position on the south bank and defend the area along the river.

It is known to the world that these two actions ended in miserable defeat.

At that time I came to realize that we should never underestimate the fighting capability of the north Korean People's Army. Its ability astonished me.

The People's Army was only a couple of years old as a regular army and had no experience of modern warfare at all.

But our army was composed of elite American divisions, and south Korean troops trained by the Americans and they were under the command of the five-star general MacArthur, a war veteran who was said never to have known defeat. Despite the incomparable superiority of our army in equipment and its numerical strength, our army had surrendered the capital city of Seoul on the third day of the war and fled southwards. It was something I couldn't understand at the time, but I was unaware of the lessons taught by history and there was no other way for me than to follow the course which I had taken.

In succession I was president of the military academy, divisional commander, delegate of the south Korean army to the ceasefire talks and director of the planning department of the army headquarters and then appointed corps commander once again.

I think there is no need to explain what actions I took in these posts. When I was foreign minister in the '60s I made fiery speeches

against the north at sessions of the UN General Assembly and, later, serving as director of the anti-communist league, president of the Yusin academy of sciences and advisor to the board for national unification, I acted in line with the policy of reunifying by prevailing over communism, which was put forward by the third republic, which regarded anti-communism as the first policy of the state.

This is all self-evident. I have simply stated my past career as it was. I do not wish to repent or blame myself for my past only in terms of the general idea of anti-communism. Freedom of thought and belief is a basic human right which no physical power can ever suppress, so the idea of communism can receive support or meet opposition from people. The question does not lie in anti-communism itself, but in the fact that viewed in the light of the situation in our nation this “anti-communism” is used as a tool for turning against one part of a people of the same blood, preventing its advance and justifying American domination over south Korea. I should look back on my past in this light.

But the past is truly past. The part of my life that has gone by is a fait accompli, and that cannot be helped. This is the very thing that can never be changed. That is why the people of ancient times preached in earnest that we should live a true and honest life without the slightest deviation.

Second Exile

I was born into a family of believers in Chondoism who had adhered to Tonghak through many generations, and grew up under its influence. Therefore nationalism was my ideal from childhood.

In the course of realizing this ideal, I never considered giving it up and nor shall I in the future, too.

The nationalism I cherish is the idea and will of faith in and devotion to the dignity and interests of the nation.

In south Korea I held in succession responsible posts in military and administrative organizations and held a key post in religious circles.

But the question is to what extent I was able to be faithful to my

ideal in these positions. And if I was not faithful, I have to give the reasons.

To state my conclusion first, I could not be faithful to my nationalist ideal and the political climate in south Korea did not suit the rooting of a nationalist ideal.

I would like to go into this further.

Some people may think that I, at one time an army corps commander in the south Korean army, the foreign minister of the south Korean government and the advisor to the board for national unification, will reveal some of the behind-the-scenes moves and scandals, artifices and intrigues of the men of power in south Korea which I witnessed. But when the positions I occupied in those days are considered, it is not appropriate for me and is beyond the realms of possibility. At the same time it is not an important matter, either. What matters here is how I comported myself.

In occupying important offices, I thought and resolved to make good use of any opportunity which was offered to the full, which would, in my own opinion, put me in a position to devote myself to the nation. And for this I drew on my resources and displayed my courage. I had a passion for dedicating my body and soul to the nation which I never forgot even for a moment, suffering hardships on the continent. But, eventually, my hopes and ambitions were ruined and I could not but exile myself for the second time.

This important decision was taken not on a moment's impulse. It is difficult for me to say exactly when I began to be sceptical about my actions, my government and all that was happening around me. I think that the factors that contributed to my second exile had been gradually accumulated over several decades of complexities and checkered history.

Whilst retreating pursued by the People's Army during the Korean war and seeing the so-called ever-victorious US army compelled to sign the ceasefire agreement, I wondered for whose benefit this war had been fought and what it had done for our nation. I could not feel easy in my mind.

I still cannot forget that whenever we met the delegates from the north at the ceasefire talks, they were our compatriots whilst those from the south were US soldiers and, on top of that, I, who

represented the south Korean army had neither a voice nor the right to vote. To be honest, I was not even a consultant for the US army. I attended the talks without fail, but sat idly in my seat, with no idea of what was to be discussed. I always observed closely and with deep interest the dignified posture of the representatives from the north at these negotiations.

In contrast, still today I blush for shame and sneer at myself when I recall the miserable figure of Choe Dok Sin who would sit absent-mindedly as the least important representative of the southern side. The senior representative of the US army even called President Syngman Rhee by his name without any title of respect whilst using an honorific title for the senior representative from the north, calling him General Nam Il even in his absence. At the ceasefire negotiations those having control were, in the final analysis, Americans upholding the UN flag and south Koreans could not express their desires or will at all. Everything was swayed by the interests and will of the United States, and south Koreans had nothing but the obligation to move and act as dictated by the Americans. Without doubt, at the time I was the servant and puppet of the Americans. Foolishly and surprisingly enough, however, I was not aware of it at the time.

Was this phenomenon manifested only at the ceasefire negotiations? No. Taking a consensus of the national administration as a whole, south Korea and its government were controlled not by south Koreans but by Americans. No matter how terribly the south Korean generals, to say nothing of myself, were put to shame even by American officers, we could not remonstrate with them at all. And the consumption of even one gallon of petrol required the approval of the Americans. There is no need to go into this matter further. At that time, just as today, it was hardly to be expected that the army which had yielded the supreme command to foreigners would have any independent decisive power.

I came to experience more when I took part in conducting state affairs as the foreign minister under the Pak regime after the May 16 coup d'état.

After Pak Jung Hi's assumption of office, the United States was very cool towards him for sometime. I understood that the US government was displeased with the Pak regime because he had

been involved in the revolts in Ryosu and Sunchon in 1948, had illegally overthrown the Chang Myon government and put out a call for nationalism after seizing power. But my suppositions were naive and foolish. I did not realize that actually the affairs of state were conducted not ostensibly, but behind the scene and all matters were decided there. But it is known to the world today that right from the outset Pak Jung Hi took every action under the instructions of the United States and with its cooperation. The true nature of the coup was brought to light when ex-director of the CIA Allen Dulles declared that the military coup in south Korea was the greatest success he had attained while in office.

Serving as a minister under Pak I came to understand in full the relationship between the regime and the United States. The latter was the protector and manipulator of the former. Generally, the American embassy intervened in all the affairs of state including policy and all the personnel administration. Important decisions made by the government were never taken without getting the green light from the United States, and if even a high-ranking official earned the dislike of the American embassy, he would not stay in office for long.

Taking into consideration the circumstances in which Pak Jung Hi as a President found himself, I think it is more pertinent to call him, in view of his actual role, the south Korean agent representing American interests in south Korea rather than the President of south Korea.

Still fresh in my memory is the miserable appearance before President Kennedy of Pak Jung Hi during his visit to the United States, imploring him to increase military aid to south Korea which was fighting on behalf of America at the front line of anti-communism. To my shame I sided with him at the time, believing that to some extent his request was necessary. As things stood at the time, the most important question which was discussed at every cabinet meeting was essentially whether the matters on the agenda would gain the approval of the United States. A matter of primary concern for the central public officials was the smile or frown of the officials of the American government resident in south Korea. This was absurd and shameful, but it was true.

In the final analysis, the south Korean government could not

take any measure without the approval of the US ambassador or the commander of the US army.

I would like to cite one more instance from my personal experience.

Pak Jung Hi paid an official visit to West Germany when I was serving as ambassador there after being dismissed as foreign minister. In the course of preparing the joint communique to be issued by the two governments, the West German side suggested adding a few words about Korea's reunification. Pak Jung Hi was quite bewildered at this. Seeing this, the West German side asked him what the problem was, not understanding the situation. After a little while, Pak Jung Hi replied that he could not agree to it because he had failed to receive the consent of the American government beforehand. Still I cannot forget the looks of consternation and derision on the faces of the West German chief delegates.

Such being the case, the south Korean foreign ministry underwent indescribable difficulties in foreign relations and was put to unbearable shame on more than one occasion.

A short time before becoming foreign minister, I visited Australia as the head of a friendship delegation with a view to confirming her support for the Pak Jung Hi military government. But Prime Minister Menzies refused to receive our delegation. Inwardly I chided him for his discourteousness. However, we could not return without meeting him. Although it would bring disgrace on myself as a representative of a nation, I demanded an interview again. Otherwise, the news media would immediately have made a big fuss about it, saying: "The south Korean delegation was cold-shouldered by Menzies and refused admittance." If things had happened in this way we would have been clothed with shame in the international arena, aside from being called to account. So at last we obtained permission for an interview on the condition that we could meet for just a few minutes, simply to extend greetings.

At the very start Prime Minister Menzies asked in reproachful and despising tone, "What do you want with me?" I was aghast. How could he treat the envoy from a country with which he had diplomatic relations in this way, even though he was displeased with the Pak regime which had overthrown the constitutional

government and wrested power overnight at the point of a bayonet?

At the time I was truly miserable, defending myself any way I could, but the dignity of the country was shot to pieces.

If it was because I was deprived of my country that in my early years I had wandered abroad, suffering humiliation as a man of a ruined nation, why was it that despite our assumption of the name of government we were humiliated as an unwelcome delegation by the rest of the world?

I don't want to enlarge upon this point here. I want only to affirm that viewed in the light of diplomatic convention, if it is a diplomatic delegation of a fully-fledged independent and sovereign state or an independent government, it cannot be treated in this way no matter what country it may visit.

I had a great shock when Pak Jung Hi visited Japan immediately after assuming office. At that time I came to realize for the first time what sort of man he was and fully understand how things stood in the relations between south Korea and Japan. As foreign minister, I was to attend Pak Jung Hi on a visit to the United States. Originally, it was intended that we should fly directly to America. But Pak Jung Hi insisted on stopping in Japan. He expressed a desire to meet the emperor of Japan and hold talks with Prime Minister Ikeda. So, we visited Japan. But he could not meet the emperor because the Japanese side disapproved, but he talked with Prime Minister Ikeda. After exchanging official words, Pak Jung Hi suggested a tete-a-tete with him, so the others present left the room.

It is not known what they discussed together. In violation of diplomatic usage, Pak Jung Hi spoke Japanese without an interpreter, so there was no knowing what these secret talks were about.

We waited outside for some time before Prime Minister Ikeda came out arm in arm with Pak Jung Hi and said in a satisfied voice with upraised hand: "It went all right. Everything turned out all right at the talks a moment ago." We were shocked at this; we did not know what went well and how. Some say that as early as that time a secret promise was made on normalizing the diplomatic relations between south Korea and Japan. Viewed in the light of subsequent events it is not difficult to imagine what attitude Pak

Jung Hi assumed in making the promise.

Here is another comedy showing Pak Jung Hi's kiss-the-dust attitude toward Japan.

The talks with Prime Minister Ikeda were followed by a banquet, where toasts were drunk and time passed until it was time to finish. So everyone wanted to leave, when Pak Jung Hi suddenly rose to his feet, glass in hand. Everyone watched him in wonderment. He approached a grey-haired old man sitting at the end of the table and bowed humbly and presented the glass to him. I went red at the thought that a head of state should lose face by bowing and scraping to an old man who, judging from the fact that his official post was not known, seemed insignificant. Later I was told that the man had been the director of the Manchukuo military academy when he was studying there. Very likely Japan rigged up this sort of burlesque with a view to testing Pak Jung Hi's "spirit of servility to Japan," and he successfully played the part of young lieutenant Okamoto.

Actually, Pak Jung Hi was covertly making a deal with Japan through Kim Jong Pil, the then chief of the south Korean CIA. The contents of the notes exchanged between the then Japanese foreign minister Ohira and Kim Jong Pil are already known to the world.

As was disclosed later, Pae Ui Hwan, the then south Korean ambassador to Japan, handed a document to the Japanese foreign ministry, saying: "This document is sent to you according to diplomatic convention, so I hope you will keep this intact. This is for the sake of formality and the real thing will arrive through the Kim Jong Pil channels."

On March 10, 1962 I went to Japan and met foreign minister Kosaka under the title of "preliminary south Korea-Japan talks." At the time, the opinions of both sides were most sharply divided on the question of claim to Japan. The assertions of each side were utterly incompatible. I endeavoured faithfully to persuade and bring the other side to reason, but it turned a deaf ear to my remarks.

That was not strange because they were holding special negotiations through the Kim Jong Pil channels. Indeed I did something foolish by maintaining a get-tough attitude towards the question of claim to Japan at the spurious negotiations which were

arranged only to hoodwink the world.

I paid dearly for these “preliminary talks”; before long I was compelled to resign the office of foreign minister.

South Korea, which had already been under the control of the United States, suffered a terrible fate to be subjected again this time to Japan thanks to Pak Jung Hi. The beginning of the unhappy history of south Korea was to come to be in bondage to and under the thumb of both the United States and Japan, and matters were taking a serious turn for the worse.

Clearly, the very life of the south Korean nation was in peril. There was no political force to defend national dignity and interests, nor the national economy. National culture was degenerating under the influence of the western bourgeois way of life and things Japanese. Everything Korean was critically hurt and withering, gradually being eliminated.

One day, when I held the post of advisor to the board for national unification, over 30 advisors gathered to have a briefing on the programmes for reunification. The minister, by way of introduction, said, “Today I will show you the programme which was drawn up in Japanese when Kim Yong Sik was in office.” Then the light went out and slides were projected. As he had said they were all written in Japanese. Around that time I heard that a certain official of the Japanese foreign ministry had worked out a programme for the reunification of Korea. When I realized this was what the slides were showing, I felt sick. Luckily something went wrong with the machine and the projection was suspended. I took this opportunity to protest:

“Minister, what is all this? What are you doing with a document written in Japanese? Don’t you fear God?”

Then several others delivered their opinions in turn and the meeting was finally suspended. It was really preposterous that the board for national unification, which was allegedly studying the problem of the reunification of the motherland, went so far as to give a briefing on the programme for reunification worked out by a Japanese.

I began to be sceptical of the policies of a government which ran counter to the national spirit.

When I resigned as south Korean ambassador to West Germany and became the leader of Chondoism I sensed more keenly that the moves of the Pak regime were following the road of obliterating the national spirit whilst he was intent only on luxury and long-term office.

In a pamphlet entitled *The Road for Our Nation to Follow* which he wrote in the early days of being in power, Pak Jung Hi touched on Tonghak, saying something or other about national spirit. And in an address delivered at the celebration of Tonghak which was held in Chongup, he said: "My father was arrested by the police while acting as a Tonghak adherent, but set free somehow... (at this point he said something under his breath) and produced an unworthy son like me." So at first people believed that he was a descendant of the Tonghak family. But it was not long before the truth came to light. His father Pak Song Bin had been arrested as a Tonghak collaborator, but saved his life by betraying a lot of people to the authorities. As a reward for this, he had later been made the magistrate of Nyongwol County. Thus he had been a traitor to the nation, an apostate from Tonghak. Of those who had been arrested for being implicated in Tonghak, not one other person was released alive from prison. Pak Song Bin alone had left prison with his dirty body veiled in clothes sullied by the blood of betrayal. That was why Pak Jung Hi hedged upon this in his address.

Thus was Pak Jung Hi so, it is inconceivable that he wanted the restoration of Tonghak.

As the activities for propagating Chondoism developed in scope and the spirit of "national security and public peace" and "opposition to Westerners and Japanese" infiltrated deep into the people, he regarded it as a menace to his power, and feared that the veil which was drawn over his own anti-nationalism would be stripped away.

A sacred grove was laid out near Lake Kumi, Kyongju, where Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism, had attained salvation, a memorial tower to the Tonghak revolutionary forces was built on Ugum Hill, Kongju where their blood had been spilt and the number of young people who visited the newly built Suun Hall with the aim of studying Tonghak increased. Alarmed by this, the Pak regime started openly persecuting Chondoists. Whilst bringing

financial pressure to bear upon us, they infiltrated CIA agents into Chondoist meetings, creating disturbances. One day the authorities sent a man to me and he threatened me in this way: "It will be no good for your safety if you remain here. What do you say about leaving?" The Pak regime and its followers had hatched a sordid plot to injure and slander me and were going to continue persecuting me by spreading disgraceful false rumours. What they sought to snuff out was not I as a man of nature, but my nationalist idea.

I could not compromise with a political system in which everything national was eliminated and began to feel keenly that I could not move nor live under this regime any longer. Could south Korea be called an independent state? This was a question that came repeatedly to my mind. Then all the things which I had unconsciously overlooked revived in my mind all at once with clear implication and all thing that I had seen with no definite idea occurred to me in clear definition.

Everything that came to my memory was a protest. Our government was not an independent government and the Republic of Korea was not, in essence, an independent state.

How can a government and a state which are incapable of defending their sovereignty and national rights and, according to the national interests of the United States and Japan, make the homogeneous nation that should naturally be reunified a sacrifice to their "two Koreas" policy, be an independent government and state?

Unfortunately my life has covered two periods of national suffering—national colonialization and national division.

Viewed with August 15, 1945, as a central point, the nation's problem before had been to gain the independence of the country and in the period following it was to reunify the divided country. These are the supreme national tasks that nationalists of this country should have done and must now carry out without fail.

The fact that the country was reduced to a colony was caused by external forces and the national problem of territorial division was created also by external forces. Division was not the choice of our nation. So, after August 15 liberation, the nationalist movement

aimed to solve this problem. That is why my father who is now deceased, together with Kim Gu and Kim Gyu Sik, crossed the 38th parallel, in defiance of the persecution of the US military government, to attend the Joint Conference of Political Parties and Social Organizations in the North and South convened in north Korea in 1948. (I was not made aware of its great significance until now.)

However, in its Ordinance No. 1, the MacArthur Command had already declared that it recognized only the US military government in the territory south of the 38th parallel and disapproved of the provisional government of the Republic of Korea which had returned from China after a long exile and the people's republic which the members of the preparatory committee for nation-building and their followers, including Ryo Un Hyong, had founded before the arrival of the US troops. From this time in south Korea any political resolution could not be adopted in accordance with the will of the nation, and the nationalist movement had to follow a thorny path again.

On top of this, Syngman Rhee who had been blamed before liberation by the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai for having petitioned the United States for mandatory rule over Korea had emerged as a leader of the political world, and Pak Jung Hi had formerly been an officer of the Japanese army which had run wildly to shed the blood of our nation. The national problem could not be settled under these sycophantic and treacherous regimes.

The servile idea of self-contempt and the idea of submission to major powers lay at the bottom of the evil corroding the spirit of national independence.

To say nothing of the five traitors of 1905, the Korean socialist party and the Koryo communist party which were formed later in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok respectively put forward "socialism" and the line of the "Soviet" government that could not be applied to Korea and sought to obtain aid from Russia. And the nationalist parties and groups mostly wanted to win independence by enlisting the help of Western countries or the nationalist government of China.

Moreover, the "government by interpreters" which played the coquette to the US army and brought grist to the mill after August

15 liberation changed in the days of the Pak regime into the “restaurant government” that busied itself with bringing in Japanese and entertaining them with *kisaeng*-girls with a view to making a profit by it. Is the fact not as clear as daylight that with two words, national unity, on their lips they followed the road of extinguishing our nation, the road to dependence on outside forces and national ruin and the road of opposing the reunification of the country, describing our people as an inferior nation? In such a political climate one cannot hope for the solution of the national problem, the question of Korea’s reunification. I came to realize this, albeit belatedly.

There passed across my mind the faces of some patriotic-minded people who had made fiery speeches at the unveiling ceremony of the memorial tower dedicated to the Tonghak revolutionary army. Had the Tonghak army advanced beyond Ugum Hill and captured the Kongju castle and gone further north to Seoul, the Tonghak revolution might have emerged victorious. But on Ugum Hill they were routed under the pincer attack of the government and the Japanese troops. Still our nation is very indignant, thinking of what might have been if foreign troops had not been brought in at that time.

That dependence on external forces leads to national ruin is a bloody lesson of history.

Therefore, if we are to solve this problem facing our nation, we must expel, firstly, all foreign forces and establish a national independent government, not a sycophantic, country-selling government. This is the conclusion that I have drawn from reviewing my career.

Through my life I have left much to be desired and committed many faults. At the same time, I have learnt lessons for myself throughout my complicated life. My life full of trials has been a tragic voyage steered by a very simple factor.

This factor is that today as in the past our nation has its independence and sovereignty trampled underfoot. This was done by Japan before 1945 and by the United States afterwards. The long period of time ranging from the beginning of US domination over south Korea after August 15, 1945, and the June 25 war of national shame up to this date when all the policies of the south Korean

government are shaped at the will of the American government, has been an unhappy period which has revealed considerable evidence that south Korea is not an independent state. In this period I wandered in pursuit of the sovereignty and independence of the nation, but in vain.

Finally I determined to exile myself for the second time.

My first exile was caused by the fact that I was forced to live as a person without a country and my second exile, too, was due to my being condemned to meet my fate as a new type of stateless person.

A meeting of religious men held in Osaka, Japan, was a good opportunity for me to execute my resolve to have done with the Pak Jung Hi regime. I left Seoul on February 17, 1976, bound for Osaka.

Ill-fated, I was a betrayed nationalist on his way to exile for the second time. Looking down to the rolling south sea out of the plane which was flying over the Sea of Hyonhae, I could not repress my grief. I had to drink the bitter cup of parting again with the motherland to which I had returned full of hope and spent 30 years after August 15 liberation. But there was no one to see me off or to receive me.

I talked to my homeland for the last time:

Dear homeland, why do you forsake me?

Because of your fault.

My fault?

You've done nothing for me, so I've nothing to give you.

On the contrary, I have loved the motherland and the nation all my life since I set out for the war against Japan.

But you never relieved my pain, did you?

So have I lived in vain all my life?

Yes, really.

Indeed, this was a serious admonition. I began to look back on my life. In my eyes there came and went many pictures of the past 30 years since I had landed at Pusan harbour with the joy of liberation. And I once again recalled all the factors that contributed to my second exile.

I arrived in Osaka, Japan, with mixed emotions and soon flew to

Washington via Taipei and remained there. In November 1977 I went to Tokyo and issued a statement against the Pak regime.

In the statement I denounced him and said that after coming to power through a military coup Pak Jung Hi had followed the policy of running counter to the nation and relying on outside forces. I demanded the resignation of the Pak regime and the establishment of a democratic, national government truly representative of the will of the popular masses, and made clear that the American troops should withdraw from south Korea. And, at the same time, I pledged that in spite of my poor ability I would take part in the movement for national sovereignty and democracy of the south Korean society.

Then, unable to foresee yet what was destined for the rest of my life, I lived in dreariness with the deep sadness and resentment of a refugee.

Even If the System Is Different...

Seeking a New Road for the Nation

Before and During My Visit to the North

Time has passed by unnoticed since I have been living in exile in the United States. Having broken with the Pak regime, I made a new resolve to devote the rest of my life to the great cause of national reunification for the country and the nation. However I was actually at a complete loss as to what to do.

In my childhood, I crossed the Amnok River clinging to my mother's skirt, grieving over loss of the country. In my youth I roamed the mainland of China simply out of a desire to contribute to the country's liberation. But my life in exile in my old age is of a different type. The melancholy of a lonely traveler like a stone thrown into the ocean and emptiness assails and distresses this old man. With the thought that I have become a useless person after being driven from pillar to post, I deplore my bitter fate in self-pity. I reproach myself for my prostration and feeble-mindedness and as a member of the Korean community in the United States, I am trying to do something that will help democratic national reunification. I formed the "Paedal National Council" to put my new determination into practice.

Meanwhile, after my arrival in the United States the internal and external situation of the homeland grew more complicated.

The Carter Administration went back on its commitment to withdraw the US armed forces from south Korea and began to

drastically increase military aid to the Pak Jung Hi regime. Encouraged by this, the Pak regime clamped down on the democratic forces and non-government parties recklessly, and this ended in its miserable collapse in the "October 26 incident." This was followed by the appearance of the murderous Chon Doo Hwan regime and then the Kwangju massacre. But I have no mind to speak at length here on the impact the fast-changing situation made on me. I only lamented the country's situation which was going from bad to worse, wondering when an end would come to the protracted suffering of our Korean nation.

My life in the United States far away from the homeland affords me a good opportunity to look back in leisure on my past life and observe from an objective angle the trend of the development of the political situation at home and abroad, and re-examine my views.

The situation has become clearer. As was shown by the appearance of the Chon Doo Hwan fascist regime and the Kwangju massacre, it was nothing more than a wild daydream to try and enjoy life as a member of the nation and defend its dignity in the southern half of the country. It has become evident that the disreputable root cause of all this lies in the ambitious scheme of the US government to keep south Korea under its control for good as a bridgehead for its Asian strategy.

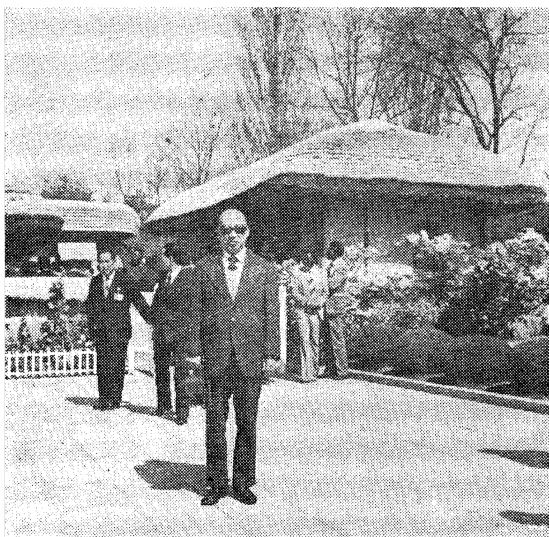
Then, isn't there any permanent relief for our nation? Troubled by such thoughts, my eyes began to turn towards north Korea before I knew where I was. To be more exact, it might have been when I began to think that the road to be followed by our nation could not be discovered under the existing political situation in south Korea and made up my mind to part with the Pak Jung Hi regime. I believed that communism and nationalism were poles apart. So, for me north Korea was still an unknown land and I even feared it. However if national reunification is essential to the revival of the nation and must be achieved without fail, we have no other way but to join hands with the communist north whether we want to or not, have we? I thought.

In the United States, where the UN and many other international organizations are based and informations from every corner of the world is available, I often came across news about north Korea which was quite different from what I had heard in south Korea. I

can say this was another factor which roused my interest in north Korea.

In the autumn of 1980 I received surprising news from President Choe Hong Hui, who had been to north Korea as head of a party of Taekwon-Do experts to put on exhibition bouts. He conveyed to me that my late father from whom I had heard nothing for a long time, and whether he was alive or dead I didn't know, had spent his remaining years in comfort in north Korea before being laid to rest there with the honourable title "patriot" under the special care of the north Korean authorities. In north Korea everybody is treated fairly, letting bygones be bygones.

President Choe Hong Hui is one of my closest friends. We served together in the south Korean army for a long time, studied in the United States together and are now living together in exile there. So, his friendly and kind information was a revelation to me of the uncertain future.^[OBJ]



The author visits the great leader President Kim Il Sung's native home at Mangyongdae

His story made me irresistibly homesick. And before my mind's eye appeared the vivid image of my late father who was resting in a grave somewhere in the northern part of the homeland. My father had devoted his whole life to the nationalist movement, but was not a bigoted and narrow-minded nationalist. My father's religious

beliefs, his Chondoist background and his broad-mindedness prevented him from taking the chauvinistic extreme-Right road. He worked hard for the unity of the nationalist camp while serving in the Provisional Government in Shanghai before August 15 liberation and for north-south negotiations and reconciliation afterwards. This was a result of his political stand, I believe.

Living in Seoul after liberation my father showed signs of disapproval of the path I took, but said nothing. He probably believed that some day I would repent. He seemed to call to me, "Dok Sin, where are you and what are you doing now?" I felt an urge to visit his grave to pay my filial respects, which might be the first and last time for me. If the road for the nation cannot be followed in south Korea, it must be discovered even in north Korea. If it was the best thing I could do for the nation, however difficult it may be, I must take the road in the name of me and my faith.

I braced myself and waited for an opportunity.

At last fortune smiled on me. The proverb which says "He who tries will find a way out" was proved true. Unexpectedly I received a letter to the effect that the political parties and public organizations in north Korea proposed that all leading figures in south Korea and abroad should meet and hold negotiations in light of the new proposal for national reunification set out at the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea.

This led me to make up my mind to visit north Korea.

On receiving the letter, I turned many things over in my mind. First of all, I was grateful that I had been proposed, a useless person in agony, to discuss the question of national reunification that was related to the fate of the nation. It was, in fact, a kind hand giving life-giving water to an old tree withering in far-away alien soil.

I gained fresh vigour and strength. What the north Koreans wanted from me and what I could do mattered little at the time. I thought I must not miss this new opportunity and resolved to discover what I could do for the country and the nation.

In this way I resolved to visit north Korea.

However, I hesitated a great deal to put my determination into action.

Above all, in my mind I felt estranged from north Korea.

To tell the truth, my idea of north Korea at the time was, at best, that it was an unknown society shrouded in mystery, a society far removed from the national one.

On the other hand, I was not sure how north Korea and the people there would look on this roving old man and how they would treat him.

This might have been a reflection of my idea of north Korea in those days.

I am not referring to the fact that after August 15 liberation north and south Korea followed quite different roads, but that I might have become a target of their hatred, for I had held important posts in south Korea for a long time. This posed a concrete and direct problem.

Needless to say, this was a sore spot for me and pained me. However, I could not escape this pain, nor did I want to, for any attempt to escape would have meant reverting to the past and this would have meant shame more terrible than death. I did not want my shameful past career to deter me and anyhow I had to leave this problem to the discretion of the north Koreans.

It was not only these things that hindered my plan to visit north Korea. Aside from all sorts of threats and intimidation by those who frowned upon my visit, I was given advice from people I know quite well that “it is dangerous and I should reconsider it” as if I was going to enter a “tiger’s den.”

I encouraged myself, remembering the resolute step taken by Kim Gu who left for Pyongyang in 1948 out of a desire to prevent the country being divided, saying “I must go even if I die on the 38th Parallel,” although many people tried to dissuade him.

A few months before my departure for north Korea, to be more exact in March 1981, I received a letter from Li Maeng Gi, President of the Association of Reservists in South Korea, inviting me to attend the celebration of the “National Army Day” to be held in October of that year. It must have been, no doubt, a wink given me by the Chon Doo Hwan regime to delay my visit to the north. Disgusted by this, I exclaimed to myself, “I’ll be hanged if I go there again begging under a white flag.”

I was not expelled from south Korea nor did I betray anything or

anyone. In no way did I desert the nation and the homeland.

I had left there of my own choice, unable to follow the path that brought disgrace to the nation any more and was trying to find, though belatedly, a way to make atonement before the country and the nation.

Whatever people may say, I must discover a new road for the nation. I am going to visit north Korea, which is the homeland where my fellow countrymen are living, isn't it? So I thought.

The thing to do is to see it with my own eyes and draw my own conclusions.

There is a saying "Seeing is believing," so I must go and see for myself in this way, I made up my mind to visit north Korea.

I resigned myself to a new fate, remembering the creed of the Chondoist faith that "If you are not sure where it is bright, you must go and see for yourself."

My First Impressions

It was on June 22, 1981, that I arrived for the first time at Pyongyang airport.

Many foreign passengers aboard were busy getting themselves ready to leave the plane. I stayed in my seat, waiting for them all to get off and to prepare myself for the next action I would take. It was a moment in which whatever I did I could not shake off a feeling of keyed-up tension.

Unexpectedly a man called me. "Excuse me, but aren't you Choe Dok Sin? Please get ready to leave first."

Many of the foreigners looked at me. I felt somewhat embarrassed. I went down the steps following the guide unhesitatingly.

I was surprised again to find many leading figures waiting to meet me. They shook my hand kindly in turn. A pretty little girl rushed up, saluted me and presented me with a bunch of redolent flowers seemingly fresh from the garden. I was told later that among those who met me were Rim Chun Chu, General Secretary of Central People's Committee (a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea), Chong Jun

Gi, Vice Premier of the Administration Council, Ho Jong Suk, Director of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland (now Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea) and other high-ranking officials.

I was completely surprised. I was an exile who was visiting north Korea in the capacity of a private citizen. But their reception reminded me of that for a high-level foreign delegation or, in a sense, it was even more cordial than that. In fact, among the foreign guests who had arrived by the same plane there were a few official foreign diplomatic delegations.

In south Korea I had served as a diplomat for a long time. So, I can claim to be a man who is accustomed to formalities. Furthermore setting foot for the first time in north Korea was strange to me, so I tried to maintain my "prestige" as far as possible.

But when I shook the hands that were extended to me, I felt a little ill at ease, and the experience was different from when I held the diplomatic hand of foreigners at airports in the United States, West Germany, Japan or Australia. This was particularly true when I took the hand of the young girl who rushed up to me with a bouquet, I felt a lump in my throat, because I felt as if she were my granddaughter. The real meaning of the saying that blood is thicker than water seemed to penetrate my mind.

Pyongyang is about half an hour's drive from the airport. In the car I looked out of the window at the well-kept fields stretching along the highway, but my mind was still gripped with the impression I had just received at the airport. Little cherry trees with bunches of fully-grown pearl-like red flowers lining both sides of the highway came into view. They were so splendid that I spoke to the guide accompanying me.

"Aren't those cherry trees? Don't the children touch them?"

The guide answered: "They are actually tended by the school-children in the vicinity."

I asked no more. Though understandable, I was not fully convinced. If all the cherry trees that I saw intermittently through the car window were put together, they would have formed a

stretch of wood about 4 kilometres long at least. This took us to the streets of Pyongyang.

I had already heard tell about Pyongyang. My first impression was that the city, which had been reduced to rubble in the war, had risen admirably on the debris and that it was covered with greenery without the slightest trace of the war. If you set out to look carefully for traces of war, you will find only that this city has a strong colouring of newly rising city with new buildings and well laid out roads and large neighbourhoods.

Twenty-eight years had passed since the armistice. This was a tedious and protracted period, viewed in the light of the history of national division, but it was a short period covered by less than one generation in the eyes of the history of construction. I pondered anew over the greatness of human strength and realized another truth, that the strength of peace and construction is stronger than war. With a military career behind me, I was well aware of the scorched-earth tactics employed by the US army during the war and remembered the words of their generals that north Korea would never be able to rise again. I smiled wryly.

What attracted my attention in particular was that Pyongyang was a quiet and peaceful city quite different from what I had imagined.

Up until then I had pictured Pyongyang, the capital of socialist north Korea, as a “Red city” with “revolutionary drums beating” and streets emblazoned with portraits of Marx and Lenin everywhere and alive with labour detachments, picks or spades in hand.

In Pyongyang, however, I could not find a trace of anything copied from abroad. In contrast to Seoul, all the signboards hung across the streets were written in Korean letters and there were many women dressed in national costume. This impressed me greatly. As I had heard it said ironically that they wore white coat and black skirt at best, I looked at them closely. Their clothes were of many colours and of a modern style. Sometimes little boys and girls wearing red neckerchieves would march along streets lined with weeping willows, singing songs. This was a strange scene for the “communist Red city.”

Pyongyang is surely the home of weeping willows. A former capital of Koguryo, this city was once called a city of willows, because of their abundance. Flourishing willows with drooping branches lining the streets were redolent of the flavour of the old days. Fragrant ginkgo trees, which are abundant in the south, had been planted recently in the streets, to improve the scenery of the city.

There were well-arranged flower gardens in the centre of the roundabouts and fully-grown potted flowers on the window sills of the apartments, the like of which are rarely found in the cities of Western Europe, because of environmental pollution.

I recovered my presence of mind. I felt rather agitated by feelings I could not express.

That evening I was invited to dinner party to welcome me to Pyongyang.

It was given at the Ongnyu Restaurant, a public noodle house built like a pavilion according to the traditional Korean style. Its name is derived from the fact that it stands on the Taedong River by crystal-clear streams. The name was appropriate.

Those who had met me at the airport in the daytime and other important people greeted me like an old friend.

A speech welcoming me warmly was made in honour of my visit to north Korea. We talked over a glass. Ordinary as our talk was, I felt that the gap between us was gradually growing narrower. The atmosphere slowly thawed so that I felt as if I was meeting old friends after a long separation.

Thus began our first acquaintance.

But this is by the way. For the first time I tasted “Pyongyang cold noodles” and “Taedonggang mullet,” well-known dishes of old and boasted of by the Koreans resident in North America who hail from Pyongan Province.

Situated at the foot of tree-covered Moran Hill, my lodging commanded a fine view of the blue streams of the Taedong River skirting the Chongnyu Cliff.

Lying in bed that night, I could not fall asleep for several hours. My first impressions of north Korea lingered in my mind for a long

time.

At the same time, past matters, disgraceful yet unforgettable, occurred to me.

I remembered the shameful “treatment” afforded me as I mentioned before, when I first landed at Pusan port feeling like a triumphant soldier after the country’s liberation, having experienced all manner of hardship in an alien land.

Sleep would not come to me. I wanted to enjoy the excitement of the first day for ever that I, an old veteran, had experienced, taking a step along a new path, having experienced many vicissitudes in distress.

I prayed, with folded arms, to Heaven for success in my visit to north Korea.

The Affection of Blood Ties

Brotherly Love

I visited north Korea again in the spring of 1982. I would like briefly to relate and describe my impressions of north Korea, based on what I saw and heard during my visits there.

The north Koreans received me very kindly. This is what I want to say first.

Visiting north Korea, I did not expect hospitality and I was in no position to do so. My only concern was how they would treat me, Choe Dok Sin.

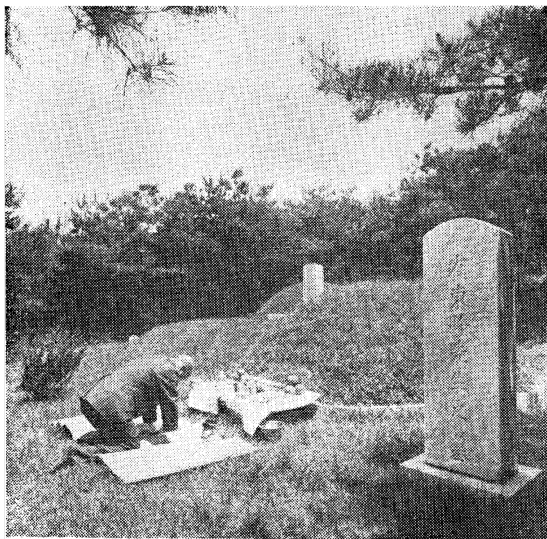
But the hospitality they afforded me exceeded anything, I could have imagined. I am not talking about liberal entertainment, but the kindness shown to me.

During my two stays in north Korea I made a tour of schools of all levels including creches and kindergartens, factories, farm villages and other places and had spoken frankly with children, workers, farmers, housewives, public officials, scholars and high-ranking officials. These were not simple conversations, but exchanges of confidences and communion.

When I visited a kindergarten, the children stopped playing and

rushed up to me and clung to my arms, calling me “grandpa.” When I visited schools, the little boys and girls saluted me standing in rows, and presented me with a bouquet and entertained me with songs and dances.

Anyone who met me inquired after my health and showed brotherly concern for my family that was scattered abroad. They treated me as if I were a martyr or a patriot returning from honourable service.^[OBJ]



The author at the grave of his patriotic father Choe Dong O

Some foreigners attribute this unusual kindness to their traditional Confucian conscience inherited from their ancestors and some others regard it as a glimpse of the well-organized collectivist education in north Korea. Both of these judgements are based on objective observations by foreigners.

What I want to say is that these views cannot provide a full explanation of the real meaning and source of the kindness shown to me, an unfortunate man.

Needless to say, I, too, took their hospitality and kindness merely as “undeserved treatment” for the first few days. And doubt actually crept into my mind stealthily. Isn’t it intended to “bribe” so to speak, “Choe Dok Sin” or to “use him?” I thought.

Then I cursed myself, shuddering at the thought. This was an

immoral conception, inexcusable for a man, a Chondoist.

What merit does this stupid Choe Dok Sin have? I am a ruined man. Then, what is the use of me? I could not help sneering at myself.

What is my value now that I am an invalid at the end of my life, if there ever was one?

If I can devote the rest of my life to the good of the country and nation and do my bit in atonement for the offences I have committed in the past, that is what I want and am looking for.

At any rate I felt with all my heart that they really treated me not as a guest, but with brotherly affection as like-minded friend.

I, an old veteran, swallowed a lump in my throat time and again, at the thought of the brotherly love and tenderness shown to me for the first time in my latter years.

My attitude was not based on sentimental feelings derived from the lonely life I had led roving among foreigners in an alien land since I had left my motherland as a child and my present bitter life in exile.

In the pure and warm feelings shown by north Koreans who did not put distance between people, I could read with all my heart a feeling of brotherhood emanating from unbreakable blood ties, being compatriots of a homogeneous nation derived from a common ancestry.

One Sunday I had the opportunity to have a talk over tea with Chief of the Secretariat Ho Jong Suk who I knew already (when I paid my second visit to the north, I found Ho Jong Suk had been promoted to Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party).

She is a daughter of Ho Hon who was well-known in the political circles in Seoul for his activities from the years of the Singan Association movement under Japanese imperialist rule to the years following August 15 liberation. Although over 70 she wore her years well and looked healthy. She still retained traces of her youthful beauty. Having been involved in a new women's movement in her early years, she had once lived in exile in China before August 15 liberation and returned to Pyongyang after national liberation. Since then she has held important posts in the

political world. This is a brief biography.

So, our talk naturally turned to the hardships and sorrow of life in exile and our feelings for our compatriots and drifted to what national consciousness and fraternal sentiment are.

“It is like a feeling based on our life, so to speak, which is indefinable logically, isn’t it? As I often experienced abroad when meeting compatriots from the homeland, I felt only gladness, with copious tears welling up in my eyes for no reason,” she said.

To her mind the gladness one experiences when meeting one’s fellow countrymen defies logical definition. However, compatriotism is not mere instinctive and blind sentiment but ought to be viewed as the consciousness which is formed in accordance with reason in the long course of community life, she added.

I nodded silently.

I became keenly aware that the kindness of the north Koreans is derived from the love for a fellow countryman who is of the same ancestry through the ages and this love for a compatriot is interwoven with warm affection for one’s parents, wife and children, brothers and sisters.

All children are dear to their mother. She loves and takes good care of them all and wishes to guide them along the right path. Hence, our fellow countrymen who are of the same ancestry are brothers and sisters, wherever they may be, in the north, in the south or abroad, whatever their ism and idea may be and whatever their system. I felt this fraternal sentiment more keenly when I visited my father’s grave and my birthplace.

Visit to My Father’s Grave

One of the major aims of my visit to the north was to visit my father’s grave. On my arrival in Pyongyang, I wished to call there first to pay my filial respects. But I hesitated to make such a suggestion in view of the practices of socialist north Korea.

As an old saying goes, “Things should be arranged according to the host’s pleasure,” so I had to leave it to the discretion of my host.

The day after my arrival in Pyongyang my guide called on me and asked whether I would like to visit my father’s grave first, even

though I might be tired after such a long journey. I was extremely grateful that my innermost thought should be answered before anything else.

As I have heard recently, President Kim Il Sung suggested drawing up a plan for my visit so that I might go to my father's grave first.

I was accompanied by a few men from the Consultative Council of Former South Korean Politicians in the North for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification, of which my father was a member until his death. I think they must have been notified by my guide beforehand. My father's grave is in the Ryongsong District, a northeastern suburb of Pyongyang. It lies on the sunny, southern middle slope of a hill overgrown with big old and bushy young pine trees. Even according to the clairvoyant it is evidently a propitious site for a grave, commanding a fine view. The large mound is surrounded by a lawn of fine grass closely mown like a green carpet and fenced around with concrete stakes.

Although I had been told about the grave by President Choe Hong Hui, I had never imagined that it would have been kept so well. I stood for a good while before the tombstone that was over a meter high and engraved with the words "Patriot Choe Dong O."

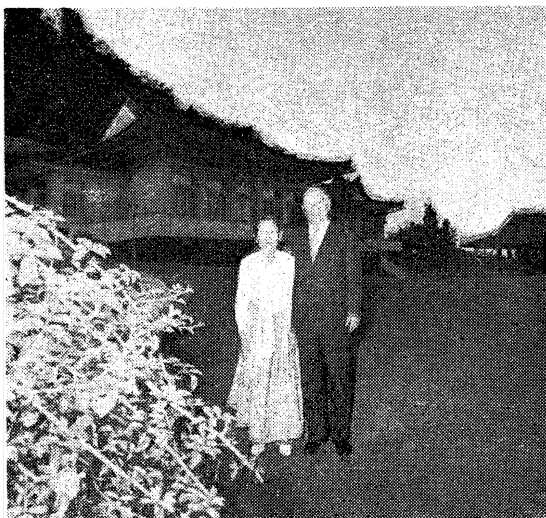
Patriot! What an honourable title this is! This title is not awarded to everyone, particularly not to an ordinary person.

From my early days I had esteemed my father as a patriot who had willingly followed an arduous path to restore the lost country. However, he had not been a communist, but a Chondoist and nationalist.

This highest honour had been conferred on him by none other than the authorities of communist north Korea. What did this mean?

If he had remained in south Korea, could the remaining years of his life have been adorned with such an honourable title? Clearly not, I was sure. I am well aware of the hardship and contempt he experienced on returning home after August 15 liberation, despite the fact that he had taken part in the anti-Japanese independence struggle and been a member of the Provisional Government in Shanghai. Things become even clearer when one considers that Kim

Gu, Ryo Un Hyong and lately Chang Jun Ha and other honest-minded nationalists have died an unnatural death. [OBJ]



The author and his mother's sister after 50 years' separation

In the light of this I bowed out of gratitude for the conduct of the north Korean authorities which appreciate patriots from the national point of view, transcending their isms and stand.

As a believer in the Chondoist faith, I wanted to hold a memorial service in the Chondoist fashion, with a brass bowl of clear water, and in this they helped me with complete sincerity. Those who accompanied me spread a mat before the grave and set up the altar on it. The things I was given to use as offerings were wonderful and the skill with which they prepared them made me think of the fastidious feudal Confucians of the olden days.

Frankly speaking, as I had been a wanderer from my early years and a believer in the Chondoist faith, I was almost ignorant of the Confucian rites, so I observed them closely.

In compliance with my desire to hold a service in the Chondoist fashion they filled a large brass vessel with clear water, a well-known medicinal water, for me.

Kneeling before the grave, I closed my eyes. Bitter memories of the past crowded on my mind and I could not hold back the tears of repentance that streamed down without my will the cheeks of this

unfilial son.

It was in 1949, that was 32 years before, that I had parted from my father. Leaving for the United States, I bade him farewell but little did I dream that it would be the last I would see him.

Having returned to south Korea, I found that he had already gone to the north. There was a rumour that he had been kidnapped, but my mother denied it and whispered in my ear, trying to persuade me that he, together with Kim Gyu Sik, had been invited to enter north Korea. Having received a message to take him a change of clothes, my wife had gone on foot, having no car, only to find that he had already left together with Kim Gyu Sik. At that time it was difficult to decide which of the two different versions was true.

But now, considering that after the entry of the soldiers of the People's Army into Seoul, they expressed officially or unofficially that they had been ready to help the north Korean side, what had really happened became clear, I think. In this sense, now I seem to understand what my mother whispered in my ears.

Having come over to north Korea, my father was supposed to have said some time before his death: "Dok Sin is dancing to the tune of evil fellows, but will come to himself some day and take the right path." So he waited for this unfilial son, believing in him.

The more I think about it, the more I regret that I was an unfilial son. If I had followed his will, he might have lived longer.

Still with my head lowered before the spirit of the departed, I asked his pardon again and again, just as when I had been whipped on the calf and scolded as a boy.

The grave of Yu Dong Ryol, my father-in-law, was near my father's, side by side with those of Kim Gyu Sik, An Jae Hong and others who had come over to the north around June 25, when the war broke out. A tombstone bearing the inscription "patriot" is set before each of them, as before my father's.

Since my childhood I have been well aware from hearsay that veteran champions of the independence movement who were active abroad ardently desired that they should be buried in the liberated homeland. Even now old compatriots in foreign lands, too, hope to be buried in the unified homeland.

These ardent desires which can be called the spirit of the nation are being realized only here in north Korea, which holds all of them in respect in disregard of their ideas and political views and whether they are in south Korea or abroad. This is fidelity and love based on blood ties which is quite different from the much talked-about "leniency," I believe.

Most of the hundreds of thousands of Korean nationals in Japan were born in south Korea and yet have returned and are returning to north Korea. This fact shows that they are coming to the embrace of love, I think.

At any rate, in the course of my visit to my father's grave, I came to realize through the reality how wide the embrace of the nation is.

The important thing is that if both communism and nationalism are based on a love of the nation and the country, the gap between them cannot be an abyss across which no bridge can be built but it is bound to be bridged and, accordingly, the homeland will embrace the whole nation in love.

While seeing me off, the grave keeper said in a low voice:

"No worries in the future. We take good care of them on the 105th day after the winter solstice and the harvest moon festival on behalf of those in south Korea or abroad who cannot visit their ancestors' graves. Don't worry. I'll take care of them with all sincerity until the day when you come to visit them with your brothers, sisters and children after national reunification."

I grasped his hand warmly and bowed in token of my gratitude.

After 50 Years of Absence

Originally I had not planned to visit my home before leaving for the north. This was not because I had no longing for my old home nor that I did not have any relatives I wanted to meet. It was my dear old home that I had never forgotten for even a day of my 50 years as a vagabond. I wanted to see just the site of my home once again and visit the graves of the departed. I was anxious to get news of my mother's youngest sister, who was well past 70 then, and meet her children.

But I was strongly disinclined to ask to be allowed to visit my home. My intention was to restrain from the “foolish act of waking a sleeping tiger and getting injured.” As I had taken, intentionally or unintentionally, a path that was hostile to north Korea, I imagined that my relatives at my birthplace had suffered harm in some way or other. In case they were leading a quiet life keeping secret or ignorant of the fact that they were related to me, I did not want to get them into trouble by bringing our relationship to light.

As I had obtained a general idea of how matters stood in north Korea during my stay there, I felt the urge to visit my home village.

After much hesitation I hinted that I was very impatient to know what had become of my birthplace where I had lived for some time.

“I see. You ought to visit it,” said the guide without awkwardness. He even said that he was very sorry not to have guessed my intention. The question that I had raised after so much hesitation was settled so easily that I felt rather ill at ease. The necessary steps were taken promptly. Since I had nothing in particular to prepare, I set out without difficulty for my birthplace after an absence of 50 years.

I was born in Komun valley studded with a few huts in a remote mountain recess which is about 28 kilometres away from Uiju, North Pyongan Province. My father set up the village school there and, living in seclusion from the world, nurtured his desire to save the country.

Oddly enough, I was excited at the thought that at the age of nearly 70 I would visit my old home after leading a vagrant’s life of adventure for about 50 years.

As the schedule of my visit was tight the authorities sent me a helicopter.

Flying in the helicopter, I got a fine view of the boundless blue sky, the mountains and rivers, picturesque fields and all the other beautiful aspects of the motherland stretching before my eyes.

Passing over mountains and fields, we landed in the very Sodang valley which I had never forgotten for even a day. The old shabby huts had been pulled down and the surroundings rearranged, but the terrain that was familiar to me was still there. It was, without doubt, Sodang valley.

I almost ran to the former site of the schoolhouse. Scooping up a handful of earth with both my hands, I rubbed my nose and cheeks with it again and again. Warm tears welled up unbidden in my eyes.

The fields of the homeland which are associated with the dreams of my parents and in which I was born, and the longing for the smell of the earth on which I had shed my tears when leaving the homeland with no prospects of ever returning home, carrying the sorrows of a ruined nation—this was not mere homesickness. This represented an earnest desire of the nation for the country's independence and the attachment of the people for their birthplace.

All the grudges that had been built up throughout my life found vent in those tears which I shed on the soil of the motherland.

Those accompanying me comforted me soothingly.

I remembered a spring and asked them about it. I was shown it. It was a spring of clear water. My father, as a believer in the Chondoist faith, had valued clear water, calling it "Doksu."

The spring has been kept clean, which showed the devoted care of the people there. I scooped up and drank a cup of spring water. It was as biting cold as ever. My companions followed suit.

I sat down on the rock by the spring. I was seized with yearning for my mother's old home in Namchang-dong where as a boy I, led by my mother by the hand, used to thread a narrow passage among the rocks.

Namchang-dong was within half a day's walking distance from where I was. However, the helicopter brought us over the village in 5 minutes. The village had been completely rebuilt, but I could recognize it.

Landing on the bank of the Namchang River that was so familiar to me, I looked towards the Namchang village, tracing back in my memory. People came running towards me from afar, as if they had been notified beforehand. Led by the hand by two young men, an old woman came toddling up to me.

I recognized her as my mother's youngest sister.

When I was a child, she used to lead me by the hand to the shore of the Namchang River and play house with me. She used to take

me on her back when I pleaded sore feet while out walking. She was my dear aunt. When I returned home, after being whipped on the calf at the village school, she soothed me while moistening the weal with saliva.

My mother's youngest sister was standing before me, bringing back memories of my early years. She was an exact likeness of my mother.

"Aunt, I'm Jong Ho. Do you recognize me?" I said. Jong Ho was my infant name.

"Are you? Let me see. Let me..."

Tottering, she threw herself into my arms and sobbed bitterly. I was tongue-tied, and, holding her hands firmly in mine, sobbed too.

After a while I was introduced to my cousins by my aunt, the second cousin on my mother's side, my younger brother's wife and nephews. At first we felt awkward. But soon the feelings of blood ties of elder or younger brother, sister or aunt awakened in us.

She told me that she had lived long enough to see her nephew again, and asked why I had come alone, where I had left my mother, why I didn't bring my children with me, how many children I had, where I lived and how I fared. Her remarks were a medley of regret and remonstrance. She did not stop talking.

After walking for a few minutes we reached the site of my mother's old home. In the place where the mill had stood the bed stone was left and nearby I could still see a spring from which we used to drink. Memories of my childhood full of dreams and fun crowded upon my mind.

The image of my father who had stayed there for some time in the village of Namchang to evade the Japanese police authorities after his participation in the March First Popular Uprising in Uiju before he left for China, the way every morning I picked up chestnuts from under the trees behind the house to give them to my father and being pricked by the spines, and the days when I was innocent enough to offer to capture a tiger which often appeared at night—these memories flooded my mind like surging waves.

As I had done in my childhood days, I drank water from the spring and, sitting on the flat rock which had served as our pleasant playground in my early days, looked at Mt. Toam in front and

Saggat Hill behind.

There is a saying “In ten years even the mountains and rivers will change.” So, many things had changed over half a century.

A cartroad running along the brook had been converted into a wide road, modern houses had been built up in rows in the village which had rarely had visitors before and a school, clinic and shop had been set up in the centre. It resembled a well-arranged mountain recreation centre rather than a rural village. The Namchang River, which had once been a stream had been converted into a major waterway, it was used for irrigation, so I was told.

Some concrete structures had been set up in several places for this project. The purring of tractor engines could be heard here and there. Machines were operating in this remote mountain village.

Lunch was served at my second cousin's. It was a simple meal that had been prepared with great care. Most of my relatives were present.

My eldest cousin was an official of the Sinuiju City Party Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, and his younger brother, a worker at the Sinuiju Shoe Factory. One of my second cousins was working as a dancing instructor at the Pyongyang Students and Children's Palace having graduated from university and the other had become a Doctor of Medicine after graduation from university. My eldest second cousin on my mother's side was a farming sub-workteam leader and the younger one, a leader of a fruit-growing sub-workteam. Both of them were attending a university correspondence course. They were sturdy and reliable.

Again I thought of the benevolent embrace of the nation. All the more keenly did I feel how foolish I had been to fear that they might be “harmed” as an “enemy family.”

I felt that my belly was full even without eating and tears came readily to my eyes.

“Help yourself, please. If you don't eat it all, I'll take it.” My aunt was sitting beside me and urging me eagerly to eat, placing the food nearer to me.

In the past my relatives in this village as distant as my third cousin are said to have shared gruel made with a handful of rice but

now they enjoy life, wanting for nothing.

As my youngest second cousin's wife on my mother's side was not there, I asked where she was. The answer was that she had gone to her parents' in Pyongyang to have a baby and was now in the maternity hospital. Wonderful!

My visit home after 50 years' separation proved that the embrace of my kindred, compatriots and the nation remained constant despite the marvellous change in the reconstructed motherland.

Traditions Are Alive

Bloodline and National Language

As I have mentioned before, the feelings that were shown to me by the north Koreans during my visit to my father's grave and my native home were those of blood ties, like motherly affection.

What is it that arouses so much national sympathy there?

I tried to find an answer to this question.

Society is a product of politics and politics derives from an idea, they say. Then it is necessary to look into the political idea, namely, their view of the nation which has given rise to the north Korean society of today. This is the point of departure.

In connection with this, Ho Jong Suk stressed the need to shake off my former views of it.

According to a former view of the nation, the psychological community based on the commonness of language, territory, economic life and culture is essential to the formation of a nation and if something is lacking in one of these four elements, then it cannot be called a nation.

Ho Jong Suk pointed out that the kernel of this view is the community of economic life, and that no particular consideration was given to the question of bloodline at all. Then she remarked:

According to this view, historically the formation of a nation should, above all, coincide with the formation of the community of cultural life, and the economic life in particular, after the emergence of a modern civic society. Needless to say, this view is

plausible with regard to the historical development of the European nations. But, if this theory is applied mechanically to the underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa which have so far failed to carry out capitalist modernization, it will lead to the conclusion that they are not yet complete nations. Our nation is no exception. Needless to say, this view is unrealistic. Moreover, the national pride of our people who have a history of 5,000 years will not tolerate it.

Furthermore, according to this view, our people in north and south Korea, whose bonds have been severed, and are living separately cannot form a nation, not to mention our overseas compatriots scattered in Japan, the American continents, Europe and the rest of the world, due to the sorrowful fate of a ruined nation and the tragedy of national division. What a terrible situation!

With strong feeling, she said in conclusion:

“That is why the respected President Kim Il Sung a long time ago set out the Juche-orientated idea that bloodline and the community of language are the central to those elements essential for the formation of a nation.”

Listening to her, I was able to grasp another truth about the inexhaustible source of the life of our nation.

In fact, the admirable continuity and originality of our nation derive from the community of bloodline and language and adherence to them as their life and soul. The Japanese colonial rulers made desperate efforts to obliterate our nation, clamouring that “Korea and Japan are one” and that “The Koreans and the Japanese are of the same descent.” However, they could not deprive the Korean people of their bloodline and language.

The warm brotherly love shown by the north Koreans is the natural manifestation of the independent spirit of the nation which has been freed from oppression and the revival of our indigenous national character, I believe.

This thought carried me back to the adulteration of the national bloodline and language in south Korea.

An enormous number of illegitimate people of mixed bloods have been born in south Korea due to the presence of US troops

there for nearly 40 years and “international marriages” are now rampant, and this is done with impunity. Besides, our pure national language is being adulterated with English, Japanese and other languages. What a deplorable state of affairs! This phenomenon of undermining and destroying the language, the source of life and homogeneity of our nation, is terrible.

North Korea regards the community of bloodline as the primary of the national communities that bind a nation together. This has nothing to do with the racist theory of Nazi Germany which advocated “pure blood.” It is true that no people of mixed-blood are seen in north Korea, whereas there are a multitude in the south. However, the question of the community of bloodline they stress does not merely boil down to preventing the mixture of different races.

In brief, this is a question of great affection for fellow countrymen and the national pride of the Korean people. Nevertheless, theirs is not a hidebound, chauvinistic idea.

The north Korean people respect the bloodline of other nations as well as their own. They by no means despise nor look down on foreigners, particularly the black. The unusually friendly relations between north Korea and many African countries may be viewed from this angle, I believe. Likewise, they are neither hostile to the white race nor especially respectful towards it. Theirs is the attitude of promoting friendship on equal terms. Recently the number of visitors in an official or private capacity to north Korea from West Germany, France, Italy and northern European countries has been growing rapidly. But north Koreans seem far from taking the shameful step of undergoing operations to lift their nose or make their breast swell.

After all, the most important idea of the theory of bloodline is that the Korean people of the same blood are all compatriots and brothers and sisters wherever they live.

I saw a documentary film that showed President Kim Il Sung receiving some Korean nationals from Japan on a visit to north Korea. They, the young people and students in particular, were sobbing choked with emotion and stamping their feet, their faces buried on the breast of the President, and the President was patting their heaving shoulders and putting a handkerchief to his eyes. This

was a living image of the theory of the homogeneity of bloodline that was emphasized in north Korea, I thought.

As for what happened on April 15, 1982, the 70th birthday of President Kim Il Sung, it was as follows.

Pyongyang in April is especially spectacular. Variegated flowers on the streets and in the parks are out in full bloom all at the same time and the streets are alive with a flush of citizens who have changed their thick winter clothes for gay spring dress. That day in the first flush of spring, the stadium at the foot of Moran Hill was packed to capacity with more than 100,000 people. Present there were high-level congratulatory groups from 118 countries. Soon a grand mass game was to be performed by 50,000 students.

That day I went to the stadium to see the sporting events. With the appearance of President Kim Il Sung and over 10 heads of state and government from abroad at the front stand, the function began, bugles blowing stirringly. First the ceremony of conveying messages of congratulations to President Kim Il Sung was held, for which young people came running in relay to Pyongyang carrying these messages from various parts of the country and from Korean nationals in Japan. Entering the stadium the columns of relay groups stopped in front of the President's platform. The head of each group conveyed its message to the President and congratulated him. The President shook hands with and embraced each of them in turn. A young man and woman in unusual attire were standing together before the President. The guide told me that they were representatives sent in the name of the 700,000 Korean nationals in Japan. They would not let go of the President's hands. Their shoulders were heaving violently. They were apparently sobbing bitterly. The President stroked their hair and embraced them. He seemed barely able to repress his surging excitement. At the sight of this, Sekou Toure from Africa who was beside the President was seen to put his handkerchief to his eyes.

Moved by this impressive scene I, too, cried inwardly:

"Oh! This is what a nation means." And I did not doubt that the power of attraction which drew tears from people would sooner or later become the great motive force for the reunification of the divided country.

The same may be said of language.

What I want to stress here is our north Korean brothers' attitude of defending and improving our language.

Above all, mention should be made of the fact that the north Korean people are doing their utmost to prevent the infiltration of words of a foreign origin and are making active use of our native words in their every day speech.

During my two visits to north Korea I learned through talking with many people and reading numerous publications and school textbooks that words of a foreign origin had vanished and that our language was being refined with the use of native words. This impressed me greatly.

As is well known, no small number of words borrowed from Chinese and words of Japanese origin have been introduced into our language due to the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Korea. Energetic campaigns for purifying the language have been launched ever since liberation in north Korea, along with the struggle to eliminate the other remnants of Japanese imperialism, the worship of great powers and the Western way of life. In this way our language is being developed systematically by actively searching for native words and using home-grown words, instead of words of Chinese origin and borrowed words, they say. This is greatly to be desired.

By the way, in north Korea, too, students are taught basic Chinese characters and English, French, Russian and other foreign languages. But this has nothing to do with the every day language of the people and is intended to help them study science and technology.

Related to this is another story, which made a deep impression on me.

In north Korea the problem has also been raised among linguists of reforming the letters on the grounds that our letters are illegible and inconvenient for writing and pose a considerable problem to the development of typewriting and printing because they are square, so I have been told. On hearing of this, President Kim Il Sung said seriously that if such a change was effected under the present circumstances when the country was divided into the north

and the south, one consequence might be that national partition would be fixing. Although the principle was sound, he added, it should be done after the country was reunified.

In this I could see that in the north a national language, together with national ties of blood, are considered indispensable prerequisites for the reunification of the divided country. In a word, I felt deep sympathy for the inflexible viewpoint of the north Korean compatriots who regard the problem of language as an important question affecting the destiny of the nation.

The Consciousness of Tradition

Considering that the north Korean people's stand towards language is so coherent it was easy for me to gather how they approach national tradition.

Actually, I witnessed that in all fields of social life in north Korea, national tradition is being zealously safeguarded and whenever I saw this I was happy, feeling as if I was seeing the national spirit vibrating with life there.

However, I want to say, first of all, that when we say they prize national tradition it does not mean restorationism, which blindly follows the things of the past. To carry on the tradition with a critical attitude and develop and enrich it to suit the demands of the new era—this is the consciousness of tradition that is peculiar to the people of north Korea. Frankly, I, too, subscribe to this view because if we adopt all things as they were, then social progress will be brought to a standstill.

I would like to begin my study in the field of art. I was invited on several occasions to see the song and dance performances given at the Mansudae Art Theatre and the February 8 House of Culture. There I was attracted by the fact that in the orchestra, national and Western instruments were used in the ratio of one to one. At the same time, I found that the national instruments had been adapted to suit contemporary tastes, while retaining their original timbre and grace. Music and dance were also performed in a modern style while maintaining traditional national melodies and harmonies, rhythms and movements. People enjoyed singing the folk songs, and I could not hear the thick voice of *pansori* of the southern provinces

at all. I was told that the thick female voice was not suited to contemporary music.

I also visited the Korean Art Gallery on the banks of the Taedong River. Though it was built immediately after the war, it is a grand edifice over 10,000 square metres in area, which bears comparison in scale and furnishing, with those I had seen in developed countries.

On display there were a lot of works of art produced by people from long ago.

I am a layman in this field and did not lend an attentive ear to my guide after she had said, by way of introduction, that these works were worthy of being national treasures, so I cannot say much, but several exhibits such as the painting "Hunting" by King Kongmin of Koryo, the drawing "Leopard Skin" by Kim Hong Do from the Li dynasty and the calligraphy by Kim Jong Hui still remain in my memory.

In the art gallery quite a few modern sculptures and paintings were also on display. What attracted my attention was that these paintings were composed mainly of unique drawings which were obviously different in style from those which could usually be seen in south Korea and in the West. Through the explanations of my guide, I came to realize that these were true Korean paintings. Then, where is a drawing in Chinese ink? I asked, turning to relate my meagre knowledge of this, only to be told that since it did not suit the aesthetic tastes of our people today, Korean painting had switched over to colour from black-and-white painting, while maintaining its traditional style.

I thought to myself that in the field of fine art, too, the main stress was laid on national tradition, while holding fast to the principle of developing it according to the trend of the times. When I examined the Korean paintings from this point of view, it seemed to me that they emanated from a traditional, national touch but with modern refinements.

National foundation, national style and national sentiments were emphasized everywhere.

In architecture, too, national tradition is followed devotedly. As for theatres, libraries and restaurants, most of them follow a

traditional style of Korean architecture, while their furnishings are modern. In contrast, the multistory apartment blocks are built in a modern style externally, but the interior is in a more traditional style, although underfloor heating is provided, which is all out of consideration for the modern way of life and traditional feeling of the people.

There is another matter I should mention concerning tradition. This is about ancestral customs. It is said, more often than not in south Korea and among overseas compatriots, that ancestors are actually ignored and fine ancestral customs and cultural heritage have been abandoned in north Korea under communist rule.

When I returned from my father's grave, I learned that in north Korea each and every family visits their ancestral graves on the 105th day after the winter solstice and on harvest moon festival. So, I was told, the authorities take all the necessary measures, such as mobilizing all vehicles for them, on Harvest Moon Day.

My guide said:

“As everyone is well off, he seems all the more eager to visit the graves of his ancestors, unable to feel easy about those who toiled and moiled to the last.”

I had no opportunity to witness the actual scene. But I thought that viewed in the light of the social climate of north Korea which values national traditions this might very well be true, and I entertained the sincere hope that such good customs would be maintained in the future, too.

I was told that in north Korea public opinion had already been roused to some extent to demand a simplification of marriages, funerals and ancestral remembrance.

However, the authorities have neither taken any measure nor laid down any new regulations or rules to enforce a change, but demanded only that everyone should eliminate excessive waste of his own accord.

So, one day I expressed my opinions on the need to reshape boldly any old customs that were incongruent with modern life.

At this the guide said there was something in that, and went on:

“We don't think that valuing our ancestors' way of life and fine

customs and manners runs against socialism.

“Even if there is something which is uncongenial to our feeling today, we make light of it. What we are concerned about is to prevent the infiltration of heterogeneous foreign customs and maintain the national community between the south and the north and advance towards reunification.”

During my stay in north Korea I usually travelled by car. But at times I took the underground train, on which students and young people made room for me.

Of course, this was not a courtesy accorded to me alone, but a privilege all mothers with babies and old men could enjoy. And as I took the air in the pleasure ground and on the promenade, young men would pass me, usually with a slight bow. They could not know I was Choe Dok Sin and it made no difference if they did.

Apparently this is a simple matter, but it cannot be overlooked at all.

In a word, as I saw the stand and view of north Koreans on national traditions, I thought that there the system had changed into a socialist system but our national features remained unchanged and national spirit was vibrant with life. This was a surprise and pleasure to me.

Ancestral History

The Korean Art Gallery fronts onto open ground and on the other side of this there is a building which is the same as the art gallery in architectural style and scale. It is called the Korean Central History Museum.

Doctor Kim Sin Suk, director of the museum, greeted us at the front gate. She looked a little over 50 and gentle. I was told that she had once been the dean of the history faculty at Kim Il Sung University.

At first a young and seemingly unmarried woman acted as my guide. But as I pressed her with this or that question, impelled by curiosity, Doctor Kim herself, who was accompanying me, served as my guide, offering a detailed account with her extensive knowledge.

On display in the museum were several thousand historical relics of the period ranging from the primitive to the feudal societies.

Among the exhibits there seemed to be a lot of relics of Paekje and Silla but those excavated in the northern regions of our country, including those of Koguryo, were in the majority.

Moreover, relics and historic sites which were said to have been unearthed since liberation by north Korean scholars were from the areas north of the 38th parallel. This cannot be otherwise.

Let me take as an example some of the remains that provoked my interest.

I stopped more than once before some murals of Koguryo which were said to have been discovered in the ancient tombs in Anak, South Hwanghae Province and in Kangso County, South Pyongan Province. Doctor Kim explained that these murals showed the decided superiority of painting in the middle ages. A stone lantern unearthed in Sanggyong, capital of Palhae, white porcelain from the Palhae period and glazed potter told that Palhae had inherited the culture of Koguryo and developed it, she added.

Marvellous also were the famous porcelain of Koryo, metal types which were discovered on Manwol Hill, Kaesong, the capital of Koryo, the golden image and gilt-bronze image of Buddha which were found a few years ago on Mt. Kumgang and perfume of paulownia.

Looking round at the relics on show, I thought: It is an undeniable fact that the excavation of relics is making brisk headway in south Korea, too. However, now that 37 years have passed since the division of the territory, south Koreans do not know of the historical heritage unearthed in the north and north Koreans cannot see the remains excavated in the south, making a coordinated study of our history impossible, although it was originally the history of one nation and one country.

While I was thinking deeply about this, Doctor Kim asked me, pointing to the model of Chomsongdae in Kyongju, how its colour appeared, compared with the real thing. I replied that it seemed not much different, but at that moment my heart was aching because I felt as if I was seeing the wounds of national division at this history museum too.

Inspecting the history museum, I was deeply moved by the serious and sincere attitude of the north Korean people who bend their efforts towards proving the long tradition of our nation through the deep study of history and add credit to national pride.

In particular, I was moved by the sight of the newly unearthed relics and remains which told of our nation's ancient origin. On display in the museum were chipped stone implements which had been excavated in Sangwon County in the suburbs of Pyongyang. According to deduction, they were made 600,000 years ago.

And also on show in the museum were the bones of ancient people that had been unearthed in Ryokpo District, on the outskirts of Pyongyang, and bones of new men dug up in Sungho District.

I was told that these relics showed that people had lived in the incipient stage of human origin in our country, and the evolution of mankind had made brisk headway there. So, according to the north Korean scholars this proves that our nation derives its origin not from any tribes coming from the north or from those advancing northward from the south, as some people claim, but from ancestors who settled down originally on this land, and our nation is a unique homogeneous nation that has its own forefathers.

The reliability of archeological investigation on relics is another question. Anyhow I automatically bowed to their viewpoint which stressed the long and original history of our nation.

In reply to the question I asked at the close of my inspection of the museum that day about how these precious historical relics were preserved during the June 25 war, Doctor Kim said:

“During the war everything was destroyed, but the historical remains alone were not damaged at all.

“The great leader (the north Koreans call President Kim Il Sung by this honorific title) used foresight and took the special measure of moving all the articles on display to a safe place even in the flames of war. And in the postwar period he saw to it that a great deal of investment was made so that more relics could be excavated. Our museum has been built up as you see today thanks to these governmental measures and concern.”

Talking about the efforts the north Korean authorities directed towards the excavation and preservation of historical relics, Doctor

Kim recalled with emotion the fact that in the difficult period right after the ceasefire a total of 2,000 historians and students of the history faculty of Kim Il Sung University were dispatched to China to unearth remains and relics related to the history of our nation.

A few days later I also inspected the Korean Folklore Museum where I saw vividly our forefathers' way of life. I visited historic sites, too. On Moran Hill, I looked over the Pubyok Pavilion, one of the Eight Views of Pyongan Provinces, also Ulmil Pavilion, Chongryu Pavilion and Chilsong Gate, all of which are preserved in their original state, newly painted with various colours and designs.

On the banks of the Taedong River stand the Taedong Gate and Ryongwang Pavilion and on the Potong River the Potong Gate, all in their original state. On Mt. Taesong the old castle walls of Koguryo and Nam Gate were restored to their original form so that people would remember the history of their ancestors for ever.

Also, there are many places which are named after people noted in history. The vicinity of the house of Kye Wol Hyang, a *kisaeng* girl from Pyongyang, who, during the Imjin Patriotic War, finished off by a ruse a general under the command of Japanese commander-in-chief Konishi Yukinaga, was named "Wolhyangdong" after her after liberation, and it is still called this today.

And on Mt. Taesong there are "Somun Peak" named after Yongae So Mun who repulsed foreign invasion and defended the country, and "Ulji Peak" after General Ulji Mun Dok and "Changsu Peak" after the king of Koguryo, Changsu. All this is aimed at remembering our patriotic martyrs of the past and immortalizing the names of great patriots.

But I came to know that it was President Kim Il Sung who had those peaks named after well-known patriots after the ceasefire.

Through these facts, I acquainted myself with much that concerned the history and cultural tradition of our nation and I was deeply impressed by the fact that the socialism of north Korea never rejects national traditions but rather protects and carries them forward with credit.

The Dignity of the Nation

The Impressions I Gained in Moscow

The nation that is proud of its own history and treasures its traditions can always defend its dignity.

National dignity can be called the authority and prestige of nation which are manifested in its relations with other countries, and that national dignity is a fundamental condition for a nation to live as an honourable nation.

National dignity cannot be got by wishing for it, nor can it be heaven-sent. I think that it can be achieved only on the basis of self-respect with which one asserts oneself and defends oneself without relying on others.

Independent sovereignty is quite simply the way in which a nation exists to maintain and glorify its national dignity, I believe.

When I was in south Korea I was usually told that north Korea was a satellite country of the Soviet Union because it followed socialism. Even some intellectuals there contended that as our country was geographically hemmed in by big countries, it was inevitable that as south Korea relied on America and Japan, so north Korea was under the influence of the Soviet Union and communist China.

North Korea, of course, maintains its independence in relation to the great powers, but probably it cannot be freed from the pressure and control of the super powers.

This was one question I had and greatly concerned me on my visit to north Korea.

However, the doubtful thoughts I had began to be reshaped as early as my journey to north Korea.

I was bewildered when I dropped in at the north Korean embassy in Moscow. In the heart of the capital of the Soviet Union it occupies a large site and is composed of a 5-storey main building, high-rise apartments and many other buildings, and the style of all of this is grand.

Then I could not but remember the old shabby 3-storey building which was the south Korean embassy when I was south Korean ambassador to West Germany. It had no garden and had formerly been used as a house by an individual. Further, what attracted my

attention was that no Russians were seen within the embassy compound.

As for south Korean embassies abroad, it was customary that the ambassador's secretaries and chauffeurs came from the host country. This was understandable, without asking what they actually did.

However, things stood quite differently with the north Korean embassy in terms of the building and personnel affairs. Although I did not know how it worked with the country of residence, I thought that as the representative office of a small country it must possess great dignity, and as the saying goes: "Appearance suggests the true colour."

Of course, it may be frivolous to measure the activities of an embassy and, further, the external activities of a country only by the scale of its embassy building or by the fact that it does not employ people of the host country. However, I readily felt a spirit of self-respect simply in the fact that a small country had buildings by far superior to those of other embassies in the heart of the capital of a big country and employed and brought into the compound of the embassy no people from the host country.

Sycophancy Removed

The deepest impression I gained from my visit to north Korea was that north Koreans are free of the sycophantic way of thinking.

During my stay in north Korea I met people from all walks of life, and they had a unanimous sense of national self-importance and pride. There, if a slight tendency to worship others without reason or see foreign things with a favourable eye for no good cause was revealed, it was regarded as a most disgraceful malady of the worship of major powers.

They have for their precept and motto "Mine is the best."

It is not that they advocate this while making a comparison between their things and those from other countries. Also, it does not represent the posture of "a frog in the well knows nothing of the great ocean" with which they regard their own things alone as the best, but it means that even if their things are inferior to others'

they are still most precious. So, it shows their resolute conviction to live by their own efforts and on their own resources, without relying on others.

Nothing comes into being of itself.

Moreover, to our nation that is hemmed in by major powers, it is not a simple matter to do away with sycophancy which was rooted deep in our country.

In this sense, it is quite conceivable that the consciousness of independence and self-importance was not bred easily, to be firmly riveted in the minds of north Koreans.

This was true. I was told that in north Korea the struggle against sycophancy was launched immediately after liberation, but just before the '50s this tendency was still seen to no small extent. For example, in some country areas, not the diagrams of north Korea's economic development were put up, but those of the economy of foreign countries. And in certain rest homes foreign landscapes and photos of noted foreigners were hung instead of our own. This, of course, was a superficial phenomenon. But, what was important was the mentality of the people which lay beneath this.

President Kim Il Sung paid close attention to this phenomenon so that the struggle for establishing the Juche of the nation was undertaken vigorously before anything else.

This was a precious lesson for me. Uprooting sycophancy, which had been handed down through history, was a great mental revolution of our nation. I am still thinking that this was the most precious discovery I made during my visits to north Korea.

What happened concerning the "Pueblo" incident will serve as a good example to demonstrate the steadfast stand north Korea takes in defence of its dignity.

When north Korea captured the US spy ship "Pueblo" in 1968 after it had intruded into its territorial waters, the Johnson administration sent its atomic aircraft carrier "Enterprise" into the sea off Wonsan and threatened: "Return the ship, or we will bomb you."

But, as is well known, north Korea replied to the United States in the words, "With retaliation for retaliation and with all-out war for all-out war," making the people of the world excited. At this time

others were said to have tried to persuade north Korea to set the ship free quickly, saying that because the United States had never failed to wreak revenge before when its ships were captured, there might be a major war. For all this the north Korean authorities flatly refused assuming the attitude, “Don’t worry so much, we will deal on our own with this pirate ship which has intruded into our country.”

Although I have mentioned above that apparently north Korea, unlike other countries, was, not at all, following foreign fashion, it was clear to me that in reality, too, it followed original socialism, not socialism imported from abroad.

I don’t know in detail how socialism is followed in north Korea, but I think that socialism in north Korea is based on the judgement that a nation should not be under a system, but a system should be under a nation and therefore, that socialism should naturally be called an independent socialism or a Juche-based socialism.

It is a truth that has been proved in history that the nation that can defend itself and its dignity is alive but the nation that loses itself and cannot defend its dignity is ruined.

I can look ahead and see a brilliant future for our nation through the unbending spirit of national independence of the north Korean people who defend their national dignity, and I think that it is no accident that today many countries of the world, including those of Asia and Africa, respect north Korea so deeply and follow her.

Social Aspects of North Korea

A Land of Wonder

During my visits to north Korea I wanted to see as much as possible with my own eyes, and I actually saw and heard about many things in the different spheres of politics, the economy, society and culture. This attitude of mine was not based simply on curiosity about an unknown country. Moreover, my motive was quite different from that of a critic who would seek to observe and evaluate the system and politics of north Korea as a Western journalist accustomed to picking holes in the state of affairs in other countries would like to do.

Based on the understanding that north Korea, although with a different system to that of south Korea, is a half of my country and inhabited by my compatriots, and on the premise that the country must be reunified without fail, I tried to understand the reality and socialism of north Korea as much as I could from the standpoint of the nation.

Since I have already related my first impression of my arrival in north Korea, and being struck with admiration on seeing that although its system differed from south Korea's, the spirit of our nation was alive there, I think the reader will guess what the image of north Korea I'm going to introduce from now on will be like.

The conclusion is that my two visits to north Korea destroyed my outdated view of that country that had been lodged in my mind and changed my opinions on it. I found many unexpected things within the socialist reality of north Korea. And the vibrating reality of

north Korea gave me an idea of what the path should be that led to a Utopian society, something which I used to picture to myself.

When a Korean resident in North America returned from a visit to north Korea a few years ago, apparently, someone asked him, "Is that place hell or paradise?"

The reply to this was, "It is neither hell nor paradise." Then, when I returned from my visit to north Korea I was asked a similar question. So, I answered, "I have been to another world. I feel as if I have been to an earthly paradise." Those who heard me were surprised and asked:

"Good heavens, why do you praise north Korea so highly?"

"If what I said was praise, I venture to do so because it deserves praise," I replied.

And that was the end of the conversation. But my observations did not and cannot end there.

I write this article by way of resuming that interrupted conversation.

No More Beggars and Thieves

In north Korea there is not one beggar. Anyone who has not seen this fact with their own eyes will find this incredible.

They may be dubious, thinking, "Not every one who goes to the mountains will see a tiger. They may fail to see one." Anything becomes clear when seen with one's own eyes. But it is not easy to explain it in words to those who have not seen. The speaker will say that he confirmed with his own eyes that there was no beggar, while the listeners will insist that if one searches everywhere in that wide land, one may come across one or two beggars. "How can it be that there are none at all?" they will say. Indeed, as I did not inspect every nook and cranny of north Korea, I cannot insist that there was no beggar there. All I can do is to relate what I saw and pass on to the next subject.

During my stay in north Korea, I went to the theatre several times. One day, on my way out of Pyongyang Grand Theatre after seeing a play, I stopped short in spite of myself and stood watching the spectators who were dispersing in twos and threes. There were

impetuous young people who were dashing off to the bus-stop, young girls and boys walking away in groups, laughing gaily, and respectable, old gentlemen going home walking lightly under the neon lights.

No one hindered them. I was astonished in spite of myself by an entirely new sight which would have been strange in the society where I had spent all my life.

“What are you looking at so intently, sir?” asked the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland who was accompanying me.

“I am looking at the night scene around the theatre. What I am seeing is only half of the scene that would be normal in the society where I have lived.”

“What do you mean by ‘half?’” he asked, not knowing what I meant. With this he looked around, but he saw nothing unfamiliar, for this was the life to which he was accustomed.

As soon as the locked doors of the theatre open and the spectators begin to pour out, children in rags, cripples and poor old people with no means of supporting themselves make for them in swarms as if they have been waiting for this chance, and block their way, stretching out their hands before them. People quicken their step to avoid this siege by the squads of beggars who hang on persistently just for a penny. This is the scene every night outside the theatres in the society where I have so far lived. So the night scene enacted before the Pyongyang Grand Theatre seemed very strange to me because I was accustomed to something different. While the audience was leaving the theatre having seen a play, there was no dark shadow blocking the way, not a single one.

Just at that moment a young woman and a girl of ten or so were passing in front of me, and the girl was asking the woman persistently for something. It appeared that the girl was pressing the woman for something, but the latter was refusing.

I barred their way, asking the girl in a gentle voice. “Girlie, what are you asking for, eh?”

The two came to a halt and looked up at me.

“I will give it you. What is it that you want? Please tell me.”

At this, the woman said with a smile:

“This child is pestering me, insisting that she will carry my net bag.”

The girl hid herself behind the woman.

Looking at the bag in her hand that contained groceries she had bought, I could not help but smile wryly. I had thought that the girl was pestering her mother to buy her buns or something.

I wanted to talk to them.

“Missy, have you ever heard the word ‘beggar’?”

To tell the truth, I wanted to ask her if she had ever seen a beggar, but it seemed rude to do so. The girl was reluctant to answer, and only looked up at her mother.

“Oh, yes, you’ve seen them in the newspapers, haven’t you?” the woman prompted the child. “The children in the streets of south Korea begging for money.”

Then the girl opened her mouth and spoke earnestly: “The children in the south are poor young waifs.”

I had nothing more to say. Her answer was just one sentence, but it said many things. Even this little girl had a thorough understanding that beggarmdom had nothing to do with the fate of individuals nor was it their fault, but that it was a social evil. So it was a crying shame to pose a question as to whether there were beggars in north Korea or not.

As I was returning to the hotel in a car, someone asked me the question:

“Perhaps you’re wondering if there are any beggars in our country?”

“N...no, I’m not...”

Then I made up my mind never to utter the word “beggar” again.

A few years ago an American journalist visited Pyongyang, and there is an amusing yet not laughable anecdote concerning him. Since he had entered a hostile country something which had been prohibited before, (needless to say, this was not due to the policy of the Korean authorities but to a law adopted by the United States itself), he wanted to ascertain whether there were any beggars in

north Korea or not, perhaps out of a journalist's curiosity or motivated by a desire to obtain new information.

After midnight when everyone was asleep, he slipped out of his hotel and onto the streets. He searched about in parks, under a bridge, near large and small buildings, and in dark corners. If he had been in the United States, which is considered the most wealthy country in the world, and here in Washington where I live, to say nothing of south Korea, he would have found beggars easily without going to the trouble of searching almost all night.

But it was hardly to be expected that a beggar, not known in Pyongyang, would appear before this American visitor.

I am convinced that there is no beggar in north Korea. This is because there is no social reason for there being beggars. Those who have been to north Korea agree that its people are all well off, with no very rich and no very poor people.

As long as there is no section of the population that is threatened by a lack of food, clothing and housing, there cannot be beggars. Since there is no beggar, there cannot be a thief, either. It is said that the beggar and the thief are cousins. We could say that to go begging is a nonresistant act on the part of the poor and that theft and burglary are acts of violent resistance.

Wherever I went in north Korea I found that the locks were not used. There were many expensive items in my rooms, but the doors were not locked either from the inside or from the outside. It was much the same with the flats in the city.

I saw things that looked like locks fastened to the doors of some houses, but they were only symbolic to show that there was no one inside. They were simple locks so that if any one wanted to, he could easily open them. In north Korea there are many households who are not at home in the daytime, couples going to work and children at school. This large number of vacant houses is left virtually unwatched. When I visited my birthplace I heard that the farmers go out to the fields and leave their houses unlocked until they return. The doors are only needed to shut out the wind and keep out the cold.

Here is a story that I heard in north Korea. It happened some time ago. An old mother residing in Japan visited north Korea as a

member of a homeland-visiting group to see her second son who had been repatriated two years before. At the time of his return to the homeland she had given him household utensils, objects of craftwork and as much money as she could. She was delighted to hear that her second grandson had been born during this time.

At her son's house, the old mother produced a well-wrapped parcel about the size of a handbag. When it was unwrapped, something like a computer was found inside. It turned out to be a special lock. She even produced the instructions for its use, but the neighbours who were present, to say nothing of her son and his wife, were astonished. What on earth does she expect it to be used for? they wondered. The old mother, I was told, realized later, after visiting many places in north Korea, that the north is free from thieves, so a lock is needed only to show that no one is at home. It is natural that in a place where such crimes as theft and robbery are rampant, the lock-manufacturing industry should be developed. As crime techniques are improved and burglary and theft become rampant, it is inevitable that the means of prevention will also be improved.

The simple fact that there is no thief speaks volumes. To think that the absence of gangsters and thieves in north Korea is due to the efficiency of the police is a great mistake. One who fails to see that there are no social grounds for people to think of stealing or snatching things from other people, will never be able to work out the puzzle of the lock.

I feel that our forefathers' saying "Generosity comes of the rice bin" is very helpful.

My aim here is not to expound a theory for preventing crimes; I have only made a few remarks because I envy the people of north Korea who are living so peacefully.

If living in a free country means living in fear and uneasiness caused by rampant theft, robbery and gangsterism, one must think twice about the implications of that freedom.

Nowadays the haves in the West go to great lengths to protect their homes. Those who have amassed a fortune build walls taller than their houses. Not only that, on and within the walls, several savage dogs stand constant guard against strangers.

Isolated from the outside world by high walls reinforced with barbed wire, their houses do not allow access to strangers. So, beyond any doubt, these are not the house of free people but prisons in which they confine themselves of their own free will. In other words, their houses are prisons where they voluntarily lead the life of a prisoner.

One city council in the United States discussed ways of keeping out thieves and, finally, adopted a decision that every family in the city must be armed. On the other hand, the US Congress debated a bill that US citizens should not carry weapons freely because of the ceaseless murder occasioned by small arms, but met with opposition from the “Small Arms Society,” and because of this the debate was cancelled.

In both cases, the arms manufacturers shouted for joy. The logic here is that for money-making burglars must exist and increase in number.

If the society where the people lead a prison life of their own accord to keep out robbers, the society where they boast of a life which they lead in fear and trepidation, or the society where it is regarded as socially inevitable to carry murderous weapons, labelling it as illegal not to carry arms, is called the “free world,” I think it would be no great surprise to say that north Korean society which is free from thieves, barbed wire and fences and has no need for locks, is a Kingdom of Heaven the Christians say or an earthly paradise longed for by us believers in the Chondoist faith.

There Are No Professional Entertainers

During my stay in Pyongyang I heard some interesting jokes. Though jokes, they seemed to be serious. Allow me to mention them here.

A foreign diplomat in Pyongyang (he did not disclose his nationality) would often go to Hong Kong at the weekend. One day when the diplomat appeared at the airport, an officer there said “You’re going to Hong Kong, I believe?”

Unable to hide his confusion, he whispered in the ear of the officer.

“Hush! My trips to Hong Kong are top secret. From now on I won’t go...”

“Eh! What do you mean?”

“Today my wife’s arriving from my country by air.” Only then did the airport officer realize and he smiled wryly.

Once a few women repatriated from Japan have a chat about life in the homeland. Who was the happiest here? was their topic. One woman said that the workers were the happiest; another argued for the farmers; yet another mentioned the scientists.

One woman who was quite elderly was listening to them silently and shook her head and said with conviction, as if offering a conclusion, “Women are the happiest in our homeland.”

“Women?”

“Who else can be, then?” she rejoined. “When in Japan did you ever pass a single day in peace, not worried that your husbands would drink and chase women?”

“But here in our homeland is there one professional entertainer or prostitute? There is no need to worry about your husbands, is there?”

“That’s right!”

They even clapped their hands.

If their husbands had known, they would have been utterly amazed.

Another episode occurred in the lounge during the north–south dialogue.

North Korean representative: “That’s why it is proposed that economic cooperation at least should be effected before reunification.”

Li Hu Rak: “Yes. So, our opinion is that we should build a tourist hotel on Mt. Kumgang and run it jointly as a beginning.”

North Korean representative: “What kind of tourist hotel do you mean?”

Li Hu Rak: “Well, one of those which specializes in nightclubs and parties with professional entertainers, for example.”

North Korean representative: “Professional entertainers?”

Li Hu Rak: "We are ready to supply as many of them as needed. Don't worry about that."

North Korean representative: "Aha, is that so? You are probably willing to send your wife there, Mr. Chief Li?"

Li Hu Rak: "My wife?"

There will be no need to explain that there are neither any professional entertainers nor prostitutes in north Korea. It is really a wonder that north Korea alone should be free of prostitutes while in Western countries you see them everywhere.

In other words, this proves that human rights are fully guaranteed for women in north Korea, and this fact means that equal rights are ensured for everyone who makes up the society.

When I think of the hundreds of thousands of prostitutes in south Korea, it is the depravation of that society that I must mention before anything else.

I think it is unnecessary to emphasize that the so-called occupation of "professional entertainer" is a product of poverty and, in particular, of anti-national, anti-popular social politics.

South Korean society can be ranked first in debasing the human rights of women by reducing them to the playthings of men.

During the Liberal government, at least this mediaeval white-slave market existed covertly. But from the time of Pak Jung Hi it became an open business.

Imitating clumsily the Japanese theory of "restaurant politics," Pak Jung Hi, Kim Jong Pil and all the other big bugs in power set up their "secret restaurants" and staffed them with young women, thus laying the foundations of "restaurant politics."

At these secret restaurants carousals went on day and night and tens of thousands of dollars were squandered daily. In the course of this, political plots were rigged up around power and money and filthy acts of trampling on the rights of women persisted.

"Restaurant politics" was extended even to foreign policy, and thus beauty diplomacy flourished. A special restaurant appeared even in the heart of Tokyo whose mission was to lure and bribe Japanese politicians. It must be remembered that the south Korean authorities' misdeeds of bribing American politicians which once

caused a great stir in the world included the “operation of offering women” as one important item.

Putting an end to the policy of prostitution-tourism was one of the matters raised by those who condemned Pak Jung Hi’s “Yusin” rule as the politics of a traitor.

The use of their women compatriots as offerings for mendicant diplomacy still took a passive and small-scale form, though. From the beginning, the political brigands of south Korea promoted prostitution-tourism as government policy in the name of earning foreign currency and turned the whole of south Korea into a white-slave market. This is not only an intolerable defilement of women but also an act of debasing and infringing upon the dignity of the nation.

This thought reminds me of the Korean women who were on board the ship that I commanded 37 years ago when I was returning home from China. They had been taken to the battlefields as a so-called “women’s volunteer corps” and put to all sorts of shame by Japanese soldiers. Some of them had been so molested and exhausted that they breathed their last on the ship when their native land was in sight.

Of all the insults and sacrifices inflicted on our people by the Japanese imperialists, I think the sorrow and agony experienced by those women of the “volunteer corps” arouse the most bitter feelings in our hearts.

Nevertheless, in south Korea our women were tormented again as another type of “volunteer corps,” this time called “American princesses,” and now, worse still, they are herded out as still another sort of “volunteer corps” in the name of “prostitution-tourism.” This is truly heart-rending development. As you see, the almighty dollar, which is an expression often used by people, has turned even the chastity of women into a commodity.

To me who has lived for a long time in a society where money can buy even the dignity of a man and the nation, north Korean society appeared as pure as crystal and as fresh as spring water.

As I reflect on the characteristics and physiology of north Korean society, I find it quite natural that it should be free from such a national and social disgrace as prostitution.

It is not that north Korea has no need for foreign currency. I found the position of north Korea to be that however great its need may be, the liberty of the people and the dignity of the nation must never be bartered away.

North Korea would never make the slightest concession with regard to human rights and the nation's dignity even if it were given all of the world's gold reserves instead of "dollars" and "yen." This is why I think there is no prostitution only in north Korea when it is a common occurrence all over the world. I believe that no one will rebuke me for the praise I give.

The Problem of Taxation

Just as a man needs a certain amount of income if he is to keep his household, so a state must have revenue to maintain its existence. Taxes collected from the people are its principal financial resources. This is common knowledge which leaves no room for doubt.

Therefore, if someone says that he saw or heard of a tax-free society, he may possibly be accused of talking wildly. If, notwithstanding this, he insists that he saw it with his own eyes, he may be reproved again for making such a joke after visiting a place inhabited by special, unworldly people.

What I am going to relate now is a story of this kind. It is a story about north Korea, a society where all the people are privileged and live tax-free by virtue of the guarantees provided by the social system itself.

My car came to a halt in front of a block of flats in West Pyongyang. It was Sunday.

"Which flat do you want to visit?" asked my guide. "Let us have a brief look into any flat."

We went up to the second floor and knocked quietly at the door. A middle-aged woman appeared. As my guide introduced me, she smiled brightly and invited us in. Her husband received me cordially. There was a sweet smell of food; it seemed that the evening meal was being prepared in the kitchen. First, I looked round the flat. It had two rooms with a heated floor and a toilet

with a bathroom. In the kitchen there was a refrigerator, cupboards and other things in good order. The flat was not very large, but tidy and cozy. The rooms had a variety of furniture, a TV set and almost all the other necessities of life.

I was told that husband was a worker at a shoe factory and his wife was a clerk at the city-greenery station. They were a family of five including the husband's mother and their two children.

The husband answered a variety of questions readily, but faltered when I asked him about the price of rice. So I changed the subject.

“How much is your rent?”

This time, too, he did not reply, stuck for an answer, he just glanced at his wife. But his wife, too, looked embarrassed and turned to the old mother.

“Mother, how much did you pay for the use of the flat last month?” she asked.

“Well, I think I paid four *won* and a few dozen *chon*, but...”

The guide tipped me off, “Here the rent is called house fees. It includes the charges for electricity, water, heating and other costs.”

He added that the money collected for the use of flats goes into the state treasury because the flats are all state-owned.

I made a mental calculation. It was a negligible sum. It seemed to me that as the amount of electricity and water consumed differs from month to month, the house fees, too, would differ a little. And the housewife here who goes out to work, appeared not to recollect clearly.

My guide went on to say:

“Most of the people do not know the price of rice. Even if you ask every husband in Pyongyang, you'll find few who know. The state buys rice for 60 *chon* per kilogramme and supplies it to the workers and office employees for 8 *chon*, and purchases minor cereals for 40 *chon* and supplies them for 6 *chon*. The state pays for the greater part of it. The benefits the people receive from the state are so great that they are rather forgetful of them.”

His words caused the whole family to laugh.

In the course of the conversation I shifted the topic to the

problem of taxation which I had heard had been abolished in north Korea. It was soon after my arrival in north Korea that I was told of this, but I wanted to confirm it in the reality of the people's life. When I asked when the tax system had been abolished, the guide stammered, "Was it in 1975, I wonder?"

"It was in the spring of 1974," corrected the master of the house.

At the time, he added, the law on the complete abolition of the tax system was published in the newspapers, and when some time later he received his pay, he found that it was the total amount with no deduction at all. So, he said, it remained vivid in his mind. It seemed that the recollection of that day when he received his pay without a penny deduction remained deeply ingrained in his mind as a happy memory.

I asked some more detailed questions, but it was no use. They knew only the one fact that they were not paying taxes, but they knew nothing of how it had come about, nor could they tell me anything about the actual implications.

They asked me to stay and have supper with them, but I declined and got into the car. I thought that they were living with no cares, because they are free from taxation and did not even know the amount of any household bills or the price of rice.

Later I examined the history of the taxation system of north Korea in various sources. I would like to introduce here in brief what I saw and the information that I obtained.

In 1974 the "earned income tax" which had been collected from the workers and office employees was the last to be abolished in north Korea. In north Korea the workers and office employees represent the whole of the population except the peasants. The "earned income tax" is the tax levied on their monthly earnings. It was a progressive tax imposed according to the amount of income. It was generally no more than a few per cent of the monthly earnings as far as the middle class was concerned.

Immediately after liberation various taxes existed even in north Korea. However, some time later its taxation system was reformed. Only "earned income tax" was collected from the workers and office employees and, with agrarian reform, the peasants were exempted from the miscellaneous levies which they had to pay in the days of

Japanese imperialist rule and now simply had the “agricultural tax in kind” to pay.

The state took 25 per cent of the annual agricultural yield in kind. Subsequently, the rate of agricultural tax in kind was gradually lowered and in the mid-1960s it was abolished altogether. So, with the abolition of the “earned income tax” in 1974, north Korea did away with the taxation system once and for all.

How on earth, then, can a state manage without tax revenue?

According to my investigation, the main source of revenue for the government authorities in north Korea is the incomes from state-owned enterprises. This can be understood when one bears in mind the economic structure of north Korea where factories, mines, railways and all other industries are nationalized.

In north Korea, with the growth of the economy and the rapid increase in income from it, the proportion of state revenue made up of taxes collected from the people dwindled and, in the long run, became insignificant.

I was told that in the 1970s personal taxes accounted for no more than one per cent of total state revenue.

It seems that in this situation the abolition of the taxation system became the order of the day.

I reasoned in this way:

Instead, the government would deduct the equivalent amount from the share allotted to the people in the redistribution of the gross national product, wouldn't it? In other words, I reckoned, it cannot and will not give the same, now that it does not receive as much.

However, on second thoughts, I found this reasoning was incongruous with the actual situation in north Korea.

The state appropriates enormous funds for the free education and free medical care of the people and even pays for a large portion of their rice. So it is better for it not to collect the insignificant taxes if it will have to give back what it has collected. Now what use is it to receive and then give back, as this only complicates the matter?

I am not conversant with economics, so I cannot claim to be an

expert, but it seems to me that the social structure of north Korea is such that the mode of distribution of wealth is fair and the people are the main consideration.

This thought of mine was further deepened when I heard that in 1974 not only had the government abolished the taxation system but also lowered prices (in north Korea there exists only state-run trade and there is no private trade), and raised the pay of the workers and office employees.

In Western society taxes are the greatest of all worries. It is no accident that in Western and south Korean society tax collectors are most dreaded by the people.

If people fail to pay their taxes, their property is forfeited; in cases where there is no property to be seized, the people are imprisoned. So all sorts of social tragedy such as bankruptcy followed by suicide take place.

Compared with this, the tax-free system of north Korea fills me with nothing but envy. In an article he wrote after his visit to north Korea, a writer from the West stressed: "We must consider north Korea as a model and learn a great deal from it; Western society, too, should accept this model."

Concerning the economic growth of south Korea, he said: "They trumpet their high level of growth and the miracle on the Han River. But the figures they have published are concoctions and, even if they are not, such 'growth' only brings grist to the mill of foreign capital, while saddling their own people with foreign debts. Nevertheless, it is a tragedy that the people are unaware of this."

I agree with him.

Beggars, thieves, prostitutes and the unemployed are not all the evils that are unknown in north Korea. There are also no newsboys, chewing gum sellers, shoeshine boys, tobacco peddlers and the like. This must be because every one has a stable job.

Also nonexistent are drunkards, drug addicts, gangsters, cases of murder, rape, fraud, swindling, starvation, dying in loneliness and so on.

This proves that the society is stable and that the people lead a peaceful life, so I believe.

The people do not pay taxes, nor tribute, nor medical fees, and there are neither self-supporting students nor illiterates. This is thanks to the systems of completely free education and free medical care.

North Korea knows no sycophantic ideas of worshipping America and Japan, because its people live without looking up to others; foreign goods are not sold in the stores except in the dollar shops.

There was a collective repatriation of Korean nationals from Japan which was called a “migration of people of the 20th century,” but no one leaves for abroad either to emigrate, run away or seek political asylum.

If I wished to, I could go on endlessly enumerating “things not found in north Korea.”

I found over 20 more things that do not exist in addition to the things that many other people who had visited north Korea failed to find there.

As for the “things nonexistent in north Korea,” they are things that do more harm than good to human society and evils that should not exist in the earthly paradise yearned after by us Chondoists.

In this sense, I should like to call the society of north Korea an extremely pure society which has done away with all the evils and ills on earth, a society inhabited by “heavenly beings.”

A Blessed Land

The Blessed People

I have mentioned before that north Korea is an immaculate society free from all traces of filth and evil which are a source of anguish for the people and defile the society, a society where heavenly beings live. However, this does not mean that every aspect of north Korean society has been dealt with.

The important thing in this society is the well-being of the north Korean people.

The well-being I refer to here has nothing to do with a life of

luxury, a sumptuous life provided by the power of gold.

To speak of welfare in human society, what can be a greater blessing than that everyone lives equally well, free from worry and every sort of social evil in this world?

In this sense, too, the people of north Korea can be regarded as the happiest in the world, and this cannot be measured in gold.

But I want to say that their fortune does not end here.

Their fortune lies in the great concern for man himself.

That man should be prized was and is a common saying in any country. But that is no more than a honeyed saying or an idle fancy or an ideal.

In north Korea, however, man is regarded as the most precious being in the true sense of the word and everything without exception is geared towards the welfare of the people.

Maybe herein lie the kernel and source of the well-being of the people of north Korea.

First I would like to mention the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital. This maternity hospital is situated in the centre of East Pyongyang. It consists of six buildings including Ward No. 1 and a 13-storey main building with a floor space of 60,000 square metres and a height of 55 metres. It is imposing in appearance.

I was met at the entrance by the vice-director, Dr. Chi Sok Ha. I was told that Dr. Chi had taught obstetrics and gynaecology at the Pyongyang University of Medicine before being appointed to his present post when the maternity hospital was opened.

According to him, the maternity hospital has 2,030 rooms and 1,500 beds, of which 1,000 are for the obstetrics department and the remaining 500 are allotted to the gynaecological, internal and dental departments which take care of the health of the mothers when they have given birth.

A woman who is in the hospital to have her child can have all her physical problems cured before leaving.

Those who require hospital treatment are brought in by one of 30 ambulances which stand by around the clock. Wireless communication is maintained between the ambulances and the hospital, so that even in vehicles that are moving the patients are

treated according to directions given from the hospital. Upon arrival at the hospital the patients are given full medical care.

As I opened the front door of the hospital and entered, I found, to my surprise, that the floor of the spacious central hall seemed to be covered with a carpet embroidered with camellia, broad bellflower and other blossoms. I was told that they were all gems. It was incredible. However, judging from their colours and brilliancy, they looked like gems.

I did not inquire about which gems they were, their quantity and price, nor did I feel the need to do so. Because such things were not important.

The main thing is that the floor of the spacious entrance hall on which numerous people tread is studded with jewels (even if they are not diamonds, rubies, sapphires and the like).

I was fascinated and felt as if I had entered the Dragon's Cave in a fairy tale.

It is said that in a colony in Africa a new railway line was once laid to the distant coast to carry the crude ore of 530-carat jewels to be offered as a tribute to Queen Elizabeth of England. Jewels are used in such ornaments as necklace, bracelets and rings to symbolize the wealth and rank of the nobles and billionaires. At the same time, they were, and are, objects of avarice for rich merchants, robbers and women of leisure.

How many tragicomedies take place because of jewellery, the most expensive symbol of power, wealth, luxury and vanity!

I felt so embarrassed about treading on the floor studded with so many gems that I could not help but walk over it with care.

Seeing this, vice-director Chi said:

“Wishing the best for the numerous most blessed people who come in with hope and go out with joy along this passage, the state took special care to lay gems on the floor, and so you may step on it with joy in your heart.”

Yes, he was right. What a hopeful and blessed event it is, the birth of a human being! The state spread expensive gems to pave the way for the future of such hopeful and blessed new lives and for nation.

From olden times, human life has been likened to a sea of troubles and the baby's cry at its birth had been called an expression of fear of the rugged course of life ahead.

In north Korea, however, from the start of its life a child sings of happiness as he is carried across the jewel-studded floor. How can the affected luxury of a king or a billionaire be compared to this?

As I have said before, in north Korea jewels have ceased to be worn on the necks of ladies or on the fingers of women of leisure.

It can be said that when jewels were taken from the hands of power and money, and came into the possession of the people, they occupied their proper position and regained their role to boast of their own values as the most expensive things in the world. What moved me was the magnanimous heart of a state that honours the countless kings and queens of this country by spreading gems in the first gateway by which they will leave the maternity hospital, the first home where they, having recently left their mother's womb, were given life, to start on the journey of a sunny life.

The maternity hospital is furnished with excellent equipment.

TV phones are arranged well in the hospital and communication is maintained between the interview room and the mother's rooms, between the doctors' rooms and the delivery room or operating theatres.

Urged by the vice-director, I took a seat in the central interview room and turned a switch. There appeared on the TV screen before me the slightly swollen but pretty face of a woman who seemed to have recently been delivered of a child.

"This is Room No. 11. Who do you want to see, please?" she said with a kindly smile. I was confused.

"Yes, yes..." I stammered quite at a loss as to what to say.

Seeing this, the vice-director answered in my place: "Choe Dok Sin from the United States is touring the hospital, and he's just switched on the device to see how it works."

At this, the woman made an approving remark and made a polite bow to me.

I rose hastily from my chair, and then, only then, did I regret having failed to say a kind word of greeting to the blessed woman

whom I had met through the TV in the northern part of the country.

The care of the mothers and their newborn babies is especially scrupulous.

I was told that the mothers are provided with sufficient nutriment, hematics and tonics and a system had even been established to deliver brown seaweed gathered in the East Sea directly to the hospital.

I heard that on the day of my visit there were seven sets of triplets born in the hospital. Triplets are looked after by the state with special care. Each of the triplets has a nurse to look after it until it is fit and strong enough to be sent home. After the triplets return home, they are given gifts such as food, clothing and other necessities for six years until they leave nursery and kindergarten and enter primary school.

I learned that the presents to the three children—foodstuffs including condensed milk, sugar and honey, clothes for different ages and seasons, blankets, bedding, cotton, shoes, even toys and school things and so on—amount to a lorry load.

Vice-director Chi said that President Kim Il Sung is very pleased to hear of the birth of a lot of triplets, referring to it as a sign of the nation's prosperity.

Speaking of the birth of children, I remember a passage from the travel notes published by an American priest who visited north Korea. When he called at the maternity hospital, a doctor asked him, "What do you think the first cry of a baby means?"

"Well?" he was somewhat perplexed at this unexpected question.

Then, the doctor observed without the help of an interpreter: "The cry of the child at its birth is the expression of its desire for the reunification of the country."

Some time ago a compatriot coming from Seoul said that in south Korea the first cry of baby at its birth meant, "How much do I owe to foreigners?"

This is indeed a sad contrast.

Speaking of the maternity hospital, I would like to mention the medical system in north Korea.

In the north, medical care is completely free. A patient goes to

hospital empty-handed for treatment, and when he has recovered and leaves he has only to thank the doctor verbally. There is no need to pay charges for an operation and examination and tests, the chemist's bill and what not.

All the expenses are borne by the government. I have been told that the government even pays for the board of the patient in hospital.

Even a small village, to say nothing of a city, has a medical establishment, and so the conditions are such that the whole population can get free medical assistance. When I visited my home village I discovered that it, too, had a hospital, though not a large one.

I was told that any office or enterprise of a reasonable size has its own hospital or doctor's room, so the workers and office employees can go to it, while back at home they can go to the hospital within their residential district.

A thought came into my head that this was a system under which hospitals go to the places where the people are rather than the people going in quest of a hospital.

I thought that such is the society where man is the master and the political system under which man is prized.

This is a situation that is beyond imagination from the concept of Western society where a man without money is powerless.

I have already mentioned the gem-studded floor in the entrance hall of the maternity hospital. I found something similar in the Pyongyang Metro. The metro is grand and its interior is an underground palace. Marble pillars stand on a mirror-like granite floor and murals of vast size peculiar to each station seem to be alive and moving under the brilliant light of chandeliers.

Standing in a spacious subway station which was built with a vast expenditure of granite and marble, I thought to myself:

Granite and marble are stones used in building the houses of noblemen and high-ranking officials either in olden times or today, aren't they?

In north Korea, however, such valuable stone is lavished on the underground.

Struck with wonder, I now hugged the granite pillars and now ran my hand over their surface. They were there for the benefit of the masses.

To think of it, north Korea cannot be a bonanza of gold and silver and other treasures.

North Korea cannot be so unstinted in its use of precious stones and marble and the like because it espouses communism and these things are not needed.

The important thing is that the society of north Korea treasures man and spends all its riches on him and for the future of the nation. Herein lies the essential point, doesn't it? This is my understanding of the basic feature of north Korean society.

On my way home from north Korea, I became acquainted with a foreigner on the international train and discussed various matters with him. During our conversation he said that many buildings had been erected in north Korea, but that there was some waste in them.

I asked him what he meant. To this he answered emphatically, "Is there any need to lavish gems and marble on buildings that are used by ordinary working people? If they sold them abroad, they would receive a large amount of foreign money."

So I told him, "Your point of view is too calculating. From that angle you will never gain a proper understanding of that society. As for the gems and marble, they are precious things, so our motherland does not begrudge them if it is for the sake of man and the popular masses. How, then, can you say it is a waste?" My words were prompted by a sense of national pride.

Parks Everywhere

From ancient times our country has been called a land of golden tapestry with beautiful mountains and rivers. This is a favour bestowed on our Korea by Heaven and, at the same time, the result of the valiant, strenuous efforts of our ancestors who defended and tended this land and its mountains and rivers.

The piece of prose, "The Most Beautiful Mountains and Rivers on Earth" which the righteous patriot An Jung Gun left behind in

prison at the end of his life, dealt with precisely our homeland and his boundless patriotic devotion.

I had an opportunity to see the celebrated mountains Kumgang, Paekdu, Myohyang and other scenic spots.

When I thought that I was touring the mountains and rivers of northern part of the country for the first time at the age of 70, I was filled with many emotions.

I cannot, and nor do I have the talent to, describe all the beauties of north Korea in this book.

I should like just to touch on a few features of the scenery there which has been made even more beautiful.

The first thing to mention is the admirable work of environmental protection which is going on in the north.

At the beginning of this book I mentioned my first impressions upon arriving in Pyongyang, the beautiful scenery of Pyongyang which has been constructed neatly as if to remind one of the old capital of Koguryo.

As one foreigner who saw Pyongyang said, "The city lies in a park rather than parks in the city," Pyongyang is a large park.

The hotel I first stayed at was located on the slope of Moran Hill which rises in the middle of Pyongyang. Not only the natural beauty of its surroundings, but also the nightingales and other birds flying about reminded me of a natural zoo.

It was wonderful to hear the songs of the birds in the morning and evening and, moreover, for the magpies and pheasants to come down and play on the courtyard of my hotel. They are not frightened at the approach of a man. I learned that they are protected by the state. And Moran Hill is not the only place where such scenes can be observed.

Such birds as nightingales are often seen here and there in the willow trees that are so numerous in the city, and sometimes even roe deer appear in school playgrounds in the suburbs of Pyongyang, I have been told.

Such being the situation in Pyongyang, there is no need to mention other areas.

Everywhere you go, there are thickly-wooded green mountains,

flower gardens and parks through which flow and dance crystal-clear streams.

Is this not the Happy Valley that was spoken of only in fantasy in olden times?

In the period of Japanese rule the whole land was torn up and riddled like a beehive by the Japanese and its mountains laid bare. Then, in the war that started on June 25, 1950, not a single tree was left unhurt owing to the indiscriminate bombing by US planes. But the land recovered its former natural beauty and, further, the whole territory has been turned into a park and beauty spot.

Needless to say, this could not be accomplished in a couple of days, nor by the efforts of just a few people. From where did the strength come to change the appearance of the land in less than 30 years since the war? There is an episode related to this. It was known that a large quantity of gold and other precious metal was deposited in Mt. Myohyang, and the officials of the mining industry suggested to the higher office that it should be mined.

However, President Kim Il Sung received the report about this and sternly rebuked them, saying the country's celebrated mountain should not be harmed simply for the sake of extracting a few tons of gold.

It is no easy matter to keep gold intact underground in order to protect the natural environment and, speaking in more concrete terms, not to damage the land that has been handed down through the generations over thousands of years and its beautiful natural scenery. Could any other country on earth, whether in the East or in the West, except the northern part of our country, do something like that?

Is this not a great myth as yet unknown in the turbulent swirl of this troubled age when the world is screaming in an economic depression, great powers and minor countries are floundering in a breathless arms race and certain countries are throwing away their national dignity and honour like worn-out shoes to obtain a loan?

I felt that the beauty of Mt. Myohyang does not end in the beauty of warm nature, because it is associated with the pure, humble minds of the north Korean people who leave gold intact underground to preserve the land of their ancestors.

Indeed, the mountains and rivers of the motherland could be changed into the most beautiful ones and into a paradise for the people only by a great patriot and a patriotic policy.

In this paradise the common people enjoy life together at all times.

There is a holiday home or a sanatorium at every beauty spot. It is said that not only the elite but everyone who works at factories and in the fields go there for a holiday once a year to relax. The cost is borne by the state.

What a great contrast this presented to the society which I had known up until then, that is, the society where only people of the middle class and upwards could have the pleasure of going to the mountains and seaside in the different seasons!

Furthermore, north Korea is a pollution-free area.

I was once the president of the Environmental Pollution Prevention Society in south Korea. I raised objections to the reckless introduction of polluting industries from Japan by the south Korean authorities, but this led to my dismissal from the post.

In the Western world and in south Korea environmental pollution has now become a serious socio-political problem. I do not want to reiterate that air, land, sea and rivers are suffering from pollution and that this does serious harm to the crops, livestock, fish and even the health of the people.

Compared to those other countries, what a blessed land north Korea is! I used to enjoy taking a walk along the bank of the Taedong River sometimes, of a morning and an evening. The sight of old men sitting at leisure here and there with a line in the river was like a lovely picture and, moreover, it was really fascinating to see them sometimes catch and land a carp as long as an arm. Catching a carp in a river which flows through the middle of a city! I thought this was also a scene which could be found only in north Korea.

The people of Pyongyang have places to fish on their doorstep.

If the anglers of other countries who have to go a long way to fish by car or by train saw the people of Pyongyang landing carp, mullet and crucian carp in front of their houses, they would be really surprised.

The carp and crucian carp caught by the old men looked quite substantial and meaty to eat.

It is no accident that foreign visitors to Pyongyang say that the fish of the Taedong and Potong Rivers is as good as a tonic after they have tasted it, and ask for it before any other dish.

It is scarcely possible that there is no chemical works, metallurgical factory or refinery in north Korea. Far from it, there are a large number of them. The point is that thorough measures have been taken by law to dispose of toxic substances, regardless of the expense.

North Korea has been converted into a land of bliss, I believe, because its mountains and rivers that have been handed down through the generations are not only well preserved but also great efforts are made to transform and use them more effectively for the welfare of the people and the eternal prosperity of the nation.

I should like to mention the network of irrigation canals that covers the whole country.

Each time I travelled by helicopter, I saw this for myself when I looked down. North Korea is a mountainous country. However, I could see lakes everywhere and waterways stretching out from them.

Water flows only downwards, but in north Korea it flows up and down hills, irrigating not only the paddy fields but also fields on hillsides and even orchards. I was told that this is how it enjoys a bumper crop every year.

Seeing the Mirim Barrage in the suburbs of Pyongyang, I realized clearly how north Korea controls the water.

The Mirim Barrage is a dam across the Taedong River, and it is named after its location.

The Taedong is one of the longest rivers in north Korea, but compared with the major rivers of the world, it is not so long. Therefore, the dam itself cannot be regarded as very large. However, it is noteworthy in regard of the variety of functions it performs.

The barrage serves as a bridge linking the west and east banks of the Taedong River, as a waterway for large ships to sail up and

down the river through the lock-gate and as a flood-control device.

Besides, in harmony with the barrage, the scenery around it seemed to assume a new look. As a result of its construction, there appeared an artificial lake upstream. This I heard turned naturally into a large fish breeding pond.

And I was amazed to see gently sloping channels at one end of the barrage exclusively for fish to move up and down freely.

Looking at it, I perceived the kind heart of the people in north Korea who pay the minutest attention even to the passage of fish, while carrying out such a huge nature-remodelling project, so I raised my hat to their thoughtfulness.

It is not too much to say that north Korea is an ideal land of benevolence where not only man but also every other living thing including mountain birds, beasts and fish can enjoy life.

I have heard that new, large-scale nature-remodelling projects are now under way in north Korea.

Take the Taedong River for instance. Many barrages are under construction on its upper and lower reaches, the largest of which is the West Sea Barrage near Nampo (formerly Chinnampo) that is being built by damming the 8-kilometre wide waters at the mouth of the river.

Once all these barrages have been built, the Taedong River will be used as a large canal and, at the same time, will supply irrigation water to the reclaimed tidelands.

And it is planned to build several similar barrages on the Kumya River which flows in the opposite direction to the Taedong River to empty into the East Sea of Korea. When these two rivers are linked as envisaged, the West Sea and the East Sea will be connected by a canal.

Not only that, but I have heard that the construction of the Taechon Power Station, now well under way, will reverse the flow of the rivers in the northern region which are flowing into the Amnok River. Then, the water of those rivers will be used to irrigate the recultivated tideland on the west coast, in addition to producing electricity.

I am already deeply impressed by the Mirim Barrage. So, I am

fully convinced that when all the construction projects are completed, north Korea will become an ever more beautiful land of bliss.

Even at this moment, I am thinking over many things as I gaze at the map of the motherland.

It is only when the people become the masters of the country and its mountains and rivers that these will assume their true meaning and emit a brilliant radiance.

Songs and Dances Emerge of Their Own Accord

I can say that during my visits to north Korea I was surrounded by dancing and singing.

I say so because songs and dances were always there—on the TV and radio, in the streets, and in the kindergartens, schools, factories, farm villages and everywhere.

I cannot forget the impression I received from the performance staged by the students and children's art circles when I visited the Students and Children's Palace for the first time. The performance was made up of songs and dances which reflected the innocent life of young boys and girls, and the artistic standard was so high that no one could believe it.

All the children were flawless star actors and actresses. I longed to take the whole stage to Los Angeles where large numbers of Korean residents in America were living so that they could see the performance.

I could not but be surprised that these child actors had not been specially selected from a music or dance school, but were from ordinary schools in the city.

A few days later I visited the Ryongbuk Girls Senior Middle School in Pyongyang, and there I was struck with still greater admiration when I saw performance put on by its pupils, for the stage was not the same, but their performance was as excellent as that which I had seen at the Students and Children's Palace.

To be honest, I thought to myself that the art circle at the Students and Children's Palace must have been a special one composed of children selected from the schools in the city, if not

from a school of music and dance. For this reason, I was quite prepared to find the art circle at this school not so good. This belief of mine was seriously wrong.

The accordion ensemble consisted of 50 or 60 players and a concert by a variety of musical instruments reminded me of a professional band or orchestra by their size.

Speaking of student and child art circles I should like to mention one more thing. I visited my old home village and, before leaving, dropped in at the Children's Union camp in the area.

On this occasion, too, I had the opportunity of seeing a show put on by the boys and girls who were staying at the camp. This camp is a provincial one and the campers, too, are Children's Union members from various schools in the area. So, their artistic level would surely be inferior to that of the students in the capital and, on top of that, they would not have had a lot of time to rehearse since they came from different schools in the area. Their performance, however, was splendid as if it was a reproduction in part of the performance of the art circle at the Pyongyang Students and Children's Palace or the Ryongbuk Girls Senior Middle School.

Marvelling at this fact, I asked my guide how this could be. He told me that in north Korea all the schools from college and university down are furnished with every kind of musical instrument and that the pupils and students join an art circle according to their choice and aptitude. Even those who are not involved in an art circle are obliged to learn to play at least one musical instrument.

So the kindergartens and the schools of all levels compete with one another in artistic activities, and sometimes these circle performances are put on the stage in the capital.

And not only schools but every workplace including factories, offices and farms have their own musical instruments and put on art circle activities.

In short, everyone who lives in north Korea appreciates music and, at the same time, knows how to play a musical instrument.

On hearing this, I remembered seeing on television a musical performance by a coal miner's family and a performance on a cooperative farm conducted by an old man of 70.

Later, during my second visit to north Korea, I was moved again by a show given by all the workers at the hotel where I was staying.

I thought that was another world.

In general, songs and dances which reflect life are an expression of feelings which emerge of their own accord.

We, the Korean people, with a long historical tradition are a people who are gifted with an optimistic nature and enjoy singing and dancing. How beautiful are the melodies we have inherited from ancient times.

Come to think of it, however, the vicious colonial rule of Japanese imperialism took away from our nation all our songs and dances, together with many other things. As a consequence, at most our people bewailed their sad lot singing such doleful songs as *Arirang*.

So, the songs and dances that the people in north Korea enjoy to their hearts' content not only mean that our Korean nation has recovered its optimistic spirit but also show a new aspect of national prosperity.

As a matter of fact, it is quite natural that songs and dances should come of themselves from the people who have been freed from every sort of worry, that is, worries about food, clothing and housing, about the education of their children, and about medical care, and who have the promise of ever-mounting happiness before them.

Thus, in north Korea songs and dances are not only performed on the stage but also have become a daily routine at workplaces and at home.

I felt envious of the old folk who I saw on the banks of the Taedong and Potong Rivers and on Rungna Islet. They sat angling or playing chess on one side and those on the other were dancing in a group to the accompaniment of the Changgo drum.

North Korea is a country of song, dance and rhythm. Foreigners praise the art of north Korea as "diamond art," and I am convinced that this stems from the tenor of life in the north.

And the people in north Korea ascribe all this to the gifted and energetic guidance of Secretary Kim Jong Il who is held as

successor to President Kim Il Sung. I would like to discuss this matter later.

A New Type of Man

The Birth of a New Man

The following episode occurred when the July 4 North–South Joint Statement was published and the delegates of north and south Korea were travelling between Pyongyang and Seoul.

On seeing the delegates from north Korea who were visiting Seoul for the first time, the young school children became very dubious. The delegates from the north were quite different from the image they had entertained in their minds concerning north Korean people, according to what they had been taught by their teachers.

The unsophisticated children tilted their heads in a daze and talked in whispers here and there, because the people from north Korea were just the same as their teachers and parents. Such was the substance of an article carried in a magazine at the time.

Nowadays things are somewhat different. However, not all the people of south Korea and our overseas compatriots have a proper understanding of north Korean people.

Although I cannot claim to have a good understanding, I think many people around us consider that the communists in north Korea are devoid of all sense of humanity, duty and morality, know nothing but a “revolution of destruction,” and that therefore, the people in north Korea under communist rule are nonhuman beings who are forced to work beneath an iron discipline.

I must say that this is a morbid and contorted idea formed by the anti-communist propaganda of the government authorities in south Korea over the 38 years that travel and communication between the two zones have been interrupted.

The quality of the people I saw for myself in north Korea was different from what I had been told. I saw an entirely new quality of humanity which we had overlooked or not known.

In relation to this, I would like to quote a passage from the travel diary of Cha Sang Dal, called “After Visiting North Korea,”

published last year, for it confirms my opinion.

“Our compatriots in north Korea struck me somehow as simple and unaffected, like naive mountain folk or farmers. Their faces did not betray cunning or arrogance.”

This was not the view of Cha alone, but a common opinion shared by the Koreans resident in America who had been to north Korea.

Further, I met warmhearted, kind, courteous, unaffectedly simple and honest and humble people everywhere I went in the north. Leading officials and ordinary people were all the same.

Mr. Cha identified the root of such human nature in the structure of north Korean institutions where the accumulation of wealth is impossible. I consent with this.

Human immorality usually derives from the desire for material gain. North Korean society is such that there is no need to be covetous nor any condition for coveting. This is why its people have been transformed into human beings of such a humble type.

As I have said before concerning my visit to a flat in West Pyongyang, it is a characteristic of the north Korean people that they are indifferent to their household expenses.

I nod my approval to this a hundred times since their livelihood is guaranteed by the government and, moreover, they do not know what price fluctuations are.

Why should they bother themselves with burning greed? Jobs can be found anytime and anywhere, and if only they work honestly, they will have no difficulties in their livelihood. If they want to make more money, they must work better and harder than others, and when they fulfil their production quotas before the set time, they will get a bonus. But they can earn no more even if they covet more.

If they want to lead a still more bountiful life, they have to work harder to build socialism in concert and increase the country's wealth as a whole to benefit from it. There is no other way.

The Western way of thinking will find this hard to understand. Because in the Western world people compete with each other in order to be better off, and if a man is to claw his way up to the

higher rungs of the social ladder, he has to climb over and victimize many other people.

There is a stone sculpture with the inscription “Streben nach oben” in a park in Oslo, the capital of Norway, which attracts the attention of tourists. It resembles a cone of people piled up in such a way that on top of the heads of thousands of people stand fewer, and again on them stand still fewer people, and thus the higher it becomes, the fewer the people.

And the cone is topped by only one man who stands proudly like a triumphant general.

As regards scale and artistic skill, it can be considered a masterpiece. But on closer examination its ideological content is revealed which is that a man can climb to the top of society only by sacrificing millions of others. The sculpture must be regarded as clear evidence of the Western philosophy which preaches extreme individualism.

In Western society where the multiplication of private property is the foundation of life, individualism is inevitably the mode of existence. But in north Korea the concentration or monopoly of wealth is regarded as immoral and, accordingly, such a possibility is structurally precluded. So, one need neither deceive others in order to survive nor use others as stepping-stones, nor is there any reason to ensnare, slander and plot against others in order to bring them down. It is natural that people should become indifferent to gain, simple and humble, honest and kindhearted, helping and leading one another forward.

However, here I should like to add that such new aspects of humanity in north Korean society cannot be explained away merely by the structural features of the socialist system as it is generally called.

The fact that north Korean society is incomparably clean and its people have the noblest qualities, shows that socialism in north Korea is not one that is centred on and places the main stress on the economy, but one under which man is the central factor and the main consideration.

The Highest Virtues

Our compatriots in north Korea consider it the greatest virtue to do their duty faithfully with no distinction between occupations.

When I met a second cousin of mine in my home village, he said, "The state adheres to the farming-first policy, and so it is most important for us to raise good crops," as though he, a sub-workteam leader on a small farm, was in charge of all the farm work in the country.

Whenever I visited an iron works or a machine factory, the workers would emphasize the importance of their job, observing, "Iron and machinery are the kings of industry."

Everybody in north Korea regards it as shameful to be irresponsible in or neglectful of their work and is proud to be playing an important role in building up the state and bringing prosperity to the nation. In Western society occupations are considered noble or mean depending on the level of income and physical labour is belittled in comparison with mental labour and, moreover, farming is disdained; however, in north Korea such attitudes do not exist.

Intellectuals engaged in mental labour, too, are faithful to their duty.

They do not mind what kind of profession they are in. The very fact that the profession exists in society means that it plays a part in the existence and prosperity of the society and state.

Everyone in north Korea, therefore, irrespective of whether he is a worker or a high-ranking official or a refuse collector, displays his ability in his occupation and sees in it the meaning and value of his being and feels pride and self-respect. Everyone values his duty very highly, as if the affairs of state might go astray if they failed to fulfil it. A barber makes a contribution to society with his haircutting skill and kindness. A coal miner and a boiler attendant find the reason for their existence in extracting a large amount of coal or in supplying heat to the houses of the citizens by stoking well. So, when they work faithfully and make a great contribution to society, the government confers on them the honourable titles of "merited barber," "merited heating worker" and "merited miner" and such people are respected. The worth of these honourable titles is no less than the honour of a high-ranking official or a doctorate.

Such are society and the people's way of thinking that the people cannot but be faithful to their duty.

Because this is the foundation of their existence, their view (or viewpoint) on the world is fundamentally different from ours.

The point is, in the final analysis, where to place the standard of value. What is the highest virtue? Where do we find the value of human life?

In Western society where we are living, people refer to the standard of value in their own way as a philosophical question or simply in terms of everyday life according to their position and conviction.

However, to put it bluntly, without regard to the conviction of individuals, it would be right to say that money is in general the highest standard of value in the Western world.

It is beyond imagination that even those who profess never to accept money as the standard of value live outside the sphere of influence of money as the standard of value. To put it plainly, a man's value is determined, in fact, by whether he has money or not and, if he has, how much. No one can deny this no matter how disgraceful and chagrined he may feel when doing so. Needless to say, one's position is also decided by money.

However, I can confirm that in north Korean society money and position are on no account the standards by which the value of a person is measured.

I did not seek deliberately from the beginning to investigate what the yardstick was by which north Koreans judge people. I happened to see a film which dealt with the relations between the sexes, and this made me give a little more thought to this question.

I always thought that I could correctly judge what is a man's or woman's yardstick for judging the value of another person if I saw what kind of spouse he or she chose.

In this sense my attention was drawn to the view on love held by the young people of north Korea, that is, their views concerning the kind of person they would regard as their ideal match, because the views on love of the youth of north Korea are automatically the north Koreans' sense of value.

One day I saw the film “Our Street.” The film dealt with the devoted efforts of the chairman of the people’s committee of a city to provide a more affluent and cultured life for the citizens. The film had a subplot, which was woven around the love affair between a young worker of the housing repair company under the city people’s committee and a girl design engineer who was a university graduate working at the city management section. This aroused my interest. The girl engineer came to love the young worker, moved by his devotion to the people.

Another film I saw showed how a girl painter who was a university graduate went to sketch a beautiful mountain and fell in love with a worker there.

The girl was drawn to the young man by his stern and proper view on social phenomena and the talent and enthusiasm he dedicated to society. The man’s occupation and position were of no consequence for the girl and also for her father, a scholar.

The films show that without doubt such a view of love prevails in north Korea.

In south Korea, I was often invited to officiate at the wedding of young people.

Perhaps they liked my address to the effect that we must build a paradise in this land of the living rather than in the next world, and live for ever.

In my congratulatory address I would often say emphatically:

“The new couple should build a sweet home and live in happiness. What is happiness? It does not only imply plenty of money or property. When the wife helps her husband in his work and takes care of him with all her heart and the man treats his wife with consideration and loves her dearly, this means happiness.”

I would say this to the bride and bridegroom in the hope that they would reject the practice of measuring man’s value in terms of money because I had witnessed it so often around me.

When an engagement is proposed in south Korea, the discussion of the matter does not centre around the personalities of the young man and woman concerned, but proceeds in a preposterous way.

“How much is he worth?” The question concerns property status.

“About a penny.”

“What grade is he?” In question here is the official rank of the would-be bridegroom.

“Third grade, they say... It seems he won’t give his wife a hard time.”

Such being the state of affairs, the meaning of human existence itself cannot but be called into question. Is this not a miserable state of affairs, in which human worth has been reduced to exchange value?

From what I have seen of north Korean society, it is free from such corruption, where the ethics of life are reconstructed on new social foundations. Over there, to work honestly with devotion in one’s job is automatically to serve society and the people, and a man’s manner of service and his fidelity to society and the people are the yardstick by which his worth is measured. Those who deceive and tread on others, thereby rising higher at their expense, cannot be victors, and it is regarded as a great honour to help one’s neighbours and collectively make a greater contribution to benefit society and the welfare of the people.

In north Korea the words “unassuming hero” are often used in everyday life and in newspapers. They refer to faithful people who work in silence and without a fuss only for society and the people, and the honest people who work silently for the state and society without seeking honour and reward, whether others recognize it or not. Herein lie the virtue and worth of man, and this is the principle of life of the north Korean people.

Unobtrusive Patriotism

I think I must mention another remarkable aspect of human quality in north Korea.

Flowers were in full bloom on either side of the path stretching along the bank of the Taedong River in Pyongyang. School children of 12 or 13 were tending them. But there was no one with them who looked like a teacher.

When I visited holiday homes and beauty spots, to say nothing of the parks in a city, I could see school children and women cleaning

the places. At a bus stop I saw a young man pick up a piece of fallen waste paper and put it into the wastepaper basket.

Driving along the street after a shower, I saw on the pavement an old man and a young pupil, presumably his grandson, setting upright the flower pots that had been knocked over by the rain.

When I went out to Rungna Islet one Sunday afternoon, my attention was drawn to the people who were picking up scraps of paper dropped on the lawns and collecting them together and others who were gathering scattered empty pop or beer bottles and setting them up under a tree before leaving the place after a day's relaxation.

According to my guide, the waste paper and bottles gathered together like that would later be taken away by the park keeper and delivered to the state, and they would then be reclaimed and used again for the benefit of the people.

What does all this mean?

Everywhere I went, people caught my eye, men and women, young and old, all alike, looking after the streets and villages, parks and beauty spots, public facilities and their work places with loving care, regarding them as their own.

Nobody was watching these people and such behaviour was observed not even at a couple of places. So I could not help but seriously contemplate this.

Precisely this is patriotism. Hasn't today's welfare society in the north been brought about by such patriots? Patriotism is not simply an abstract concept, but it finds expression in actual affection for the territory, history, culture and nature of one's homeland and for one's birthplace, parents, relatives and neighbours.

In this respect I found true patriotism in the simple actions of the people of north Korea.

However, the question is what is it that makes the people take care of their land voluntarily and regard the country's economic life as their own.

Once the sign "No admittance to Chinese and dogs" was set up in a park in a foreign settlement in Shanghai, China.

Could the Chinese workers have cared for the park in those

days? No, they could not, because they knew that though the park was a part of their land, it did not belong to them but to their oppressors. This is simple logic.

If the popular masses do not value and love their land and their state's property, it is because they do not regard them as their own, and conversely, it is because they love them that they treat them as their own. This attitude can never be forced on someone.

Every person in the north is conscious that he is the master of his factory or his farm, his country and society. Even if there is a man who lacks such consciousness, he could not be left behind alone in the huge current of the society of north Korea.

It is precisely this consciousness that each person is master, I thought, that is the foundation on which the patriotism of the north Korean people will develop into mass patriotism, and this mass patriotism is the source of power and the guarantee of prosperity of north Korean society.

This is not a matter to be passed over briefly. It is something vital that is clearly indicative of the destiny of our nation.

When speaking of patriotism some people think mostly of patriots like Li Jun, An Jung Gun and Yun Bong Gil and only of patriotic deeds performed by great men. They usually lose sight of the popular masses' quiet deeds of patriotism.

In the course of my contact with the true situation in north Korea I thought I should reestablish my views on patriotism (if it can be so named).

However, it is not possible for everyone at every place to rouse the masses to patriotism and make them display it.

Only a popular social system and popular politics which make the popular masses regard themselves as the masters of society and the country can do it.

For the people, their country is not precious just because it overflows with milk and honey and is full of gold, silver and other treasures.

Desert nations have fought hand-to-hand battles and shed blood to defend their bleak lands, and even the barren tundra covered with ice in every season is inhabited by people. This is not because

milk and honey flow there and gold, silver and other treasures lie buried underground.

When the people understand that it is their land, they will become eager to convert desolation into a fertile place and tundra into a paradise where every kind of fruit will thrive.

Moreover, if one fails to rouse the people to patriotic deeds, with such beautiful mountains and rivers, fields which abound in crops and fruits, a land full of gold, silver and other treasures, the territory of the motherland which is good enough to fully realize the ideal of the nation, who will be to blame?

One evening during my stay in north Korea, I was deeply impressed to see with my own eyes the expression of mass patriotism inspired by the politics centering on the people. At the time, the Tower of Juche Idea and the Grand People's Study House were under construction in Pyongyang. After an early supper, I went out onto the street for a walk. The air was balmy and cool in the early summer evening.

Coming to the heart of the city, I saw the construction site before me.

Originally, I had not planned to visit this construction site, but as my guide told me it was the site of the Grand People's Study House and about its gigantic scale and the admirable speed, with which it was being built, I felt a desire to see how the builders of north Korea were working.

I reached a corner of the construction site which commanded a fairly good view. It was bristling with cranes, large-sized building machines were at work, lorries loaded to capacity with building materials were running in and out ceaselessly, the sound of the whistles of various signallers would be heard and all this was blended into one, so that the construction site was a cacophony of deafening noise. But there were not a very large number of people as against so many machines.

As the evening closed in, lamps were lighted all at once and the construction site became as bright as day. Around this time people in working clothes-they did not look like builders-arrived on the scene in ones and twos from all directions, some of them carrying spades, others pickaxes, and the women, buckets. They loaded the

lorries with surplus soil or carried gravel and sand from the heaps to the mixers. After a while the whole of the construction site was covered with people.

Only then did I sense that something strange was happening, so I asked the guide who all these people were. He explained that in the evenings thousands of workers and office employees came after a day's work to help complete the Grand People's Study House as soon as possible, because it would be a pride of the nation. They would dig a spadeful of soil, carry a piece of stone and gather scattered materials before going home.

In reply to my question about whether they did so on the instructions of the authorities, he said with a smile that in his country there were no such authorities that gave orders or instructions like that. So, such a large number of people were voluntarily devoting themselves to their country in the evening when they could enjoy a pleasant rest with their family after a day's work, weren't they? No one organized and controlled them. Each and every one of them came and worked of their own free will wherever labour was needed.

The guide went on to say that at the moment scores of soldiers who had leave of absence for the first time in many years to go home and enjoy a good rest were quietly devoting their holiday to the construction work, and scores of workers who should have gone on holiday in their own right were silently working here. OBJ



A corner of the ever-developing city Pyongyang

And he added that this was not a phenomenon that was limited

to this place alone, but that at every place where large-scale construction projects of great importance for the state were undertaken, for instance, when the construction of the February 8 Vinalon Complex and the project for expanding the Kim Chaek Iron Works were undertaken, many people came to offer their services.

Riveted to the spot, I stood motionless listening to his narration and drinking in the seething atmosphere and the patriotic ardour of the people which prevailed on the construction site. It was late at night when I returned to my hotel, deep in thought.

This is the true state of “forced labour” in north Korea which south Korea and the United States are clamouring about. If they apply the term “slaves” dragged out for forced labour to these people who, aglow with patriotic ardour, deny themselves even the rest they are allowed and voluntarily rush out to the construction site with a spade or a pickaxe on their shoulder to work without asking any reward, then are those people free who drag themselves to the sites on an empty stomach to do work in which they have no interests, so as only to earn a few pennies for a living?

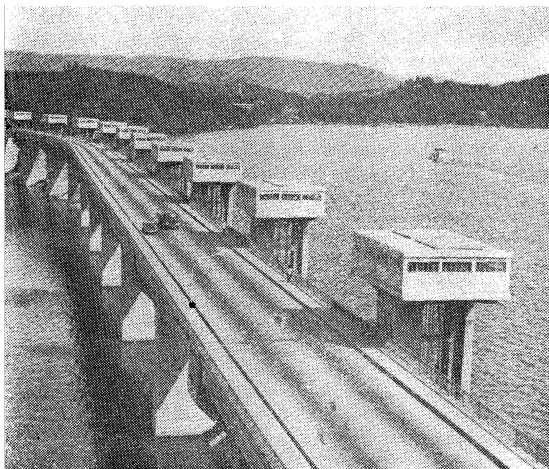
To regard oneself as the master of society and to work and live in a way worthy of a master—this is the highest expression of patriotism and herein lies the main source of mass patriotism in north Korea. It is the most simple yet the most fundamental form of patriotism.

On no account am I saying that I am satisfied with everything in north Korean society today. However, I believe the day will surely come when I shall find everything in north Korea satisfactory. The reason for this I ascribe to the quality of its people.

It appeared to me that their life was not so affluent and luxurious as in the developed European countries.

One day I walked into Pyongyang Department Store No. 2 which is located in the busy area close to the crossroads near the Taedong Bridge. When I left north Korea, I wanted to take some gifts to my grandchildren. In my mind I wanted to take with me the soil, spring water, grass, tree and even the heart of the people of my birthplace, I desired to make my grandchildren, who were utterly ignorant of their fatherland, feel at least some nostalgia for it.

I went round the department store. It was well stocked with



Mirim Barrage on the Taedong River

Of course, there were no foreign goods, and I found no luxuries needed only by the privileged classes that are seen commonly in Western society; for instance, necklaces, earrings, bracelets and other expensive luxury items.

The quality of the goods was not yet particularly high. They looked unshapely and there was no variety of colour.

The department store was crowded because it was a Sunday. I heard the people at the opposite counter roar with laughter, so I looked in that direction. A woman wanted to buy a toy car. The saleswoman tested it but it wouldn't work. A young man said to the saleswoman:

“Which factory made it? I think I must severely criticize it.”

At this, the woman who wanted to buy it told him calmly, “No, don't do that. Someone must have made a slip at work. All these are our own goods and our own affair.”

Overhearing what they said, I nodded. Here, too, I felt the warmth in the hearts of the people of north Korea. In fact, light industry in north Korea lags behind the other branches of industry. And they know it. Nevertheless, they do not envy others. At present they are satisfied with and proud of their carefree life and have the firm conviction that tomorrow everything will surely be better than

today.

Once Kim Hyong Uk, director of the CIA in south Korea, attested to the “heavy industry of north Korea running far ahead of that in south Korea” in the House of Representatives. This alone is enough to show that such confidence on the part of the people in the north is not groundless.

Leaving the department store, I have a clear understanding of the current condition of light industry in north Korea without even hearing my companion’s explanation. Putting aside their immediate needs, the people of north Korea directed their efforts towards capital construction for the future and to key industries in order to build an independent economy that did not rely on major powers, and so they could not afford to put much emphasis on the appearance or quality of consumer goods.

At present all the people of north Korea eat their fill, though not sumptuous fare, and are decently dressed in every season, even though not in high-quality silk clothes. They are satisfied with this for the time being. They say it is necessary for greater progress.

If they had no thought to the future, the people of north Korea could live in grand style as plentifully as others with the existing national wealth alone.

However, they believe that future development is more important than life today, and they are all marching forward for the future.

In north Korea, I believe, the foundations for limitless progress have been laid for the future. The most essential of these is the people.

Speaking of the northern half of the fatherland, the human wealth above all, that is, the people, the sons and daughters of the Korean nation who are not sophisticated in the Western style, but know no deviousness and are honest and loyal to their duty, the precious human resources, are the pride of north Korea and they guarantee its future, I believe.

I would therefore wish to pin the hope of our nation on the future of north Korea.

The Enigma of Strength

Economic Potential

Rapid Construction

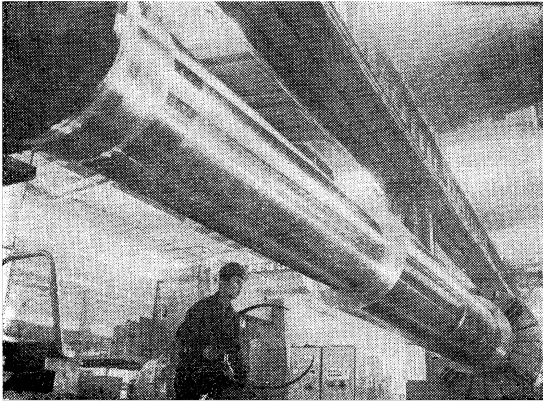
The economy is said to be the basis of the strength of a nation. Today, as in olden times it is a fact that the strength of a nation is inconceivable without economic strength.

Visitors to north Korea often liken its economic progress to a myth.

This means that unbelievable miracles are being wrought in economic development there.

I, too, had already heard that the north Korean economy was making considerable progress. Having seen with my own eyes the reality of north Korea, I deem that the most accurate description is miracle.

North Korea was utterly ravaged by the war, but has risen like a phoenix from the ashes in the 30 years since then. This fact alone is astonishing. Moreover, it has been converted into a paradise where universal, free education and free medical care are in force and where there are no taxes, something which is inconceivable without economic strength.^[OBJ]



Innovation is being brought about in the production of ordered equipment

This fact demonstrates the economic potential of north Korea, I think.

What impressed me more was that a succession of huge construction projects were being undertaken.

When I first visited north Korea the Tower of Juche Idea, the Arch of Triumph and other massive structures were under construction in Pyongyang and new residential quarters were beginning to be erected in East Pyongyang along the Taedong River. I saw for myself that Pyongyang has risen magnificently on the ashes since the war. This fact itself was a cause for admiration, I thought. But, to be honest, I wondered if north Korea, a small country, was undertaking too many major projects beyond its capacity all at once.

However, when I visited north Korea for the second time nine months later, I found that the monumental structures of the Tower of Juche Idea and the Arch of Triumph had been erected to the highest standard, Moranbong Stadium had recently been expanded and rebuilt, the Ice Rink, Department Store No. 1, the Chongnyu Restaurant and other new buildings had risen and a new urban district was being established in East Pyongyang along the Taedong River.

This was so miraculous that I could not believe my eyes. I learned that such things were not confined to Pyongyang alone.

As I have mentioned before, when the Mirim Barrage was completed, the construction of the large-scale West Sea Barrage and

Ponghwa Barrage were already under way on the Taedong River, 300,000 hectares of tideland were being reclaimed on the west coast and the construction of the Taechon Power Station, the expansion of the Kim Chaek Iron Works and other huge projects were being undertaken in different parts of the country.

Thus, construction was being carried out boldly on an incredibly large scale and at a very rapid pace. This shows the might of north Korea's economic power.

Foreign visitors to north Korea often say that the Pyongyang Metro on its own bears witness to the power of the nation.

The Pyongyang Metro has been built in magnificent style like an underground palace, and it can be said to be indicative of the economic and technical levels of north Korea. This, however, is only one aspect of the construction carried out in north Korea and its economic power.

I have no concrete knowledge of how rapid is the rate of the economic growth of north Korea, but the single fact that the equivalent of one year's industrial output in 1946 is now produced in one day is enough to show the rapid economic growth there. A 365-fold increase is by no means easy to obtain. It is all the more difficult in view of the fact that because of the wholesale destruction in three years of war, everything had to start again from scratch.

In north Korea the slogan "Chollima speed" was adopted in the period of postwar reconstruction. It meant advancing at a rapid tempo like a steed covering a distance of a thousand *ri* a day. North Korea carried out a great undertaking of industrialization on the debris of war at "Chollima speed" in the less than 20 years that have elapsed since the war and, today the "80s' speed" that exceeds "Chollima speed" is symbolic of the pace of economic construction in north Korea. Today the north Korean people think they are equal to any task once they determine to do it and are attempting bold undertakings.

However, while seeing and hearing about economic growth and large-scale construction in north Korea, one question puzzled me, and that was state finance. Because any country, whether capitalist or socialist, cannot build an economy with empty pockets. But,

north Korea neither receives much aid from abroad to speak of, nor introduces foreign capital recklessly. In contrast it lavishes finance at home on the promotion of the people's well-being without collecting taxes. Furthermore, it is easy to: imagine that because the situation around the demarcation line is under constant strain, a large amount of capital is needed for national defence. So, I wondered how she could afford to finance such massive construction projects. I wondered how north Korea alone could carry on large-scale construction undisturbed, while almost every other country in the world was experiencing serious economic difficulties due to the economic crisis worldwide.

One day I put this question to Sonu. He was the director of the Propaganda Bureau of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland. During my stay in north Korea he often accompanied me as my guide and looked after me. So, I became friends with him. He was knowledgeable and spoke coherently. I found that he was well versed in history and in particular he had expert knowledge about the modern history of our country. So he often helped me, as we toured together around Pyongyang and various parts of the country.

Sonu said earnestly in reply to my question.

“Of course, it may be difficult for you to understand at first. However, this is what has happened. We have experienced bitter trials. We have had to strive hard, tightening our belts. However, it has all been worthwhile. Finally, we have built a self-sufficient national economy which does not rely on others and we stand on our own feet. Now this self-reliant economy is proving its merits and will prove of greater benefit in the future.”

He gave me a detailed account. In brief, his remarks were: The north Korean people have built an independent national economy without relying on others after a hard struggle to defend their own dignity, and the bold construction projects now being undertaken on a gigantic scale are backed by this self-sufficient economy and, at the same time, are the manifestation of its strength.

This reminded me of the founder of Chondoism Choe Je U's remark “A paradise is dependent on your efforts.” I thought the north Koreans had proved again the truth that people must and are able to produce all the wealth in the world by their own efforts.

The Self-Supporting Economy

The great economic potential of north Korea as mentioned above is proved by the large-scale construction that is undertaken in proportion to the size of the country, and the rapid rate of growth there.

But, what is more important is that north Korea's economy has a firm base and is full of vigour. However high the rate of economic growth is, if the economy is so built that it depends on the strength of others, not on one's own strength, it is a dependent economy that is subject to others. Such a dependent economy is for the sake of appearance and similar to a castle built on sand, which may collapse at any moment. It is an economy that jeopardizes the very sovereignty of the country.

The state of the south Korean economy serves as a strong proof of this. They talk much about a "miracle on the Han River," "high growth rate" or a "leap forward," but theirs is the economy that is dominated by US and Japanese capital and technology and which is a parasite on them. The south Korean economy could not last for a single moment without foreign investment nor could it survive without it. It has been thrown into a serious crisis by the world-wide economic upheaval, which is a clear demonstration of its vulnerability.

On the other hand, the north Korean economy is steadily advancing along the path of development, unaffected by any economic fluctuation in the world. I came to realize clearly that its secret lies in the fact that they have built a solid, independent national economy.

The north Korean economy is run using its own raw materials and its own technology and national cadres. As for the raw materials, north Korea could not possibly have everything to satisfy full all its needs. To take a well-known example, north Korea has fairly large deposits of coal and iron ore, but there is no crude oil there. Petroleum is the most precious source of energy for modern industry. It is commonly known that without solving the problem of electricity, the food of modern industry, the economy itself cannot be run, let alone economic growth achieved. An instance of how north Korea has solved this basic, pressing problem suffices to show

the true aspect of this self-supporting economy of north Korea.

Here is an anecdote.

As postwar reconstruction was progressing and the economy developing, the question of electricity was raised as a serious problem. This is easily understood. The hydroelectric power stations in different parts of the country were put back into operation, but they alone could not meet the increasing demand for electricity. So, the construction of coal-fed thermal power stations along with that of new hydroelectric power stations was brought up as a matter of great importance. Some specialists suggested it would be better to build petropower stations because they would cost less and could be built in a shorter space of time.

On hearing of this, President Kim Il Sung admonished them sternly. He said that we must produce electricity by using coal that was abundant in our country even if more expenditure was required and the construction took longer. We should not build petropower stations counting on petroleum from other countries and should not turn to other countries for electricity, the motive power of the economy, he stressed.

It was difficult to build many hydroelectric and coal-fed thermal power stations. But north Korea built her own reliable power bases which were unaffected by the oil crisis sweeping the whole world causing panic among the people.

Let me take another story that will help in understanding the independent national economy of north Korea. Cloth is indispensable for the life of the people. Hence, it is an important matter in securing economic independence. However, our country is not well-suited to the cultivation of cotton. Moreover, north Korea is mountainous and its arable land is limited, so it has no land available to sow cotton. In addition, timber, too, is produced in small quantities and cocoon production is restricted. Petroleum is not produced. Yet, if we had turned to other countries for a solution to our clothing problem, this would have meant that one of the key branches of the economy was controlled by other countries.

That is why north Korea built a vinalon factory which is fed with limestone and anthracite which are extremely abundant there. Even under the difficult circumstances of the war President Kim Il Sung

saw to it that every possible facility was provided for Doctor Li Sung Gi to continue with his research into vinalon, which he eventually crowned with success.

Hearing this story, I thought that this was the basic strength of the self-supporting economy of north Korea. In addition, it seemed more important to me that north Korea does not worship and turn to large countries nor study their faces and moods, but maintains her national dignity and what lies beneath this is her solid, independent national economy. Indeed, this is a pride never before known in the history of the Korean nation.

Nevertheless, there are some people who denigrate the independent economy of north Korea as a “closed economy,” isolated from the outside. There must be people with biased views who either have their “eyes closed” or see only one side of the matter and do not see nor want to see the other side. Because the north Korean economy I saw was not a “closed economy.”

As I saw it, when the north Korean economy is said to be an independent economy, it does not mean that it breaks off relations with the outside world and meets its demands for raw and other materials and technology completely on its own. This is impossible in reality and it is not arranged in this way either. The main point is that north Korea develops her economy mainly with her domestic resources and technology and in keeping with the actual situation and interests of north Korea. It is easy to see that north Korea imports some articles that are indispensable for the development and diversification of the economy and for equipping it with up-to-date technology. Even in this case, no doubt, they serve merely to flesh out her economy so that she can reinforce and develop her own things.

At present, laying the main stress on making the economy Juche-orientated, north Korea is vigorously stepping up the process of making the economy modern and science-based to bring it up to the latest standards of science and technology. Clearly, north Koreans are convinced that because their independent national economy is laid on firm foundations they can boldly introduce and assimilate technology from the advanced countries.

During my inspection of the Hwanghae Iron Works, the Kim Chaek Iron Works and a few other large factories I marvelled at

their size and the technical equipment there although there were still things to be desired in comparison to similar factories in the advanced countries which have histories of hundreds of years of science and technology. In north Korea automation is already prevalent. I felt a great satisfaction at the fact that our people who were making only hoes and sickles in smithies when the advanced capitalist countries in Europe were in the Industrial Revolution, have now entered the era of automation.

I bowed once again before the patriotic devotion of the north Korean people who have built a powerful economy on the debris of war by their own efforts, as we see today, by tightening their belts.

Speaking of the north Korean economy and its solid potential, I have to mention her agriculture which constitutes one of the two pillars of the economy along with industry. To state my conclusion first, agriculture in north Korea is of the world standard.

During my second visit to north Korea I was told that in August, 1981 immediately after my return from my first visit, the Symposium of Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries on Increasing Food and Agricultural Production was held in Pyongyang. It was attended by delegations and delegates from over 80 countries and from 14 international organizations. On the request of the people attending, many field inspections were organized to see the agricultural development of north Korea and to learn from the experience there.

It was very significant that over 80 countries, made up of most of the non-aligned and developing countries, sent delegates to the symposium to learn from the agricultural experience of north Korea.

Due to the influence of the cold front that has recently been sweeping the world and the resultant abnormal weather conditions, the question of food has become a serious, socio-political matter throughout the world.

According to UN statistics, 50 million people are starving to death every year. This figure is approximately the same as the total death toll of soldiers and civilians in World War II, of which 17 million were children. This illustrates the seriousness of the problem.

However, north Korea gathers a bumper harvest every year. She

is affected by the cold front as well. From what I understand, north Korea is mountainous and the soil there is not very fertile.

Nevertheless, farming in north Korea is actually getting better. This is mainly due to its agricultural policy, I think.

As I have already mentioned, north Korea makes effective use of its water and has established a good network of irrigation. For a long time it has been free of damage from flooding and drought.

As I saw for myself, mechanization, electrification and the use of chemicals in agriculture were advanced. My home village in a mountainous area, for instance, had six tractors per 100 hectares of cultivated land, which, I was told, was the average figure for the whole country. Although I know nothing about farming, this is up to the level of the advanced countries, I think.

The north Korean people are proud to call their farming method the “Juche farming method.” I discovered that it meant farming in a scientific manner to suit the climate and soil of the country and the biological characteristics of the crops.

In fact, every farm had its own agronomists, specialists in stockbreeding and fruit-growing and every farmer did his work in accordance with scientific and technical principles. I learnt of this through my relatives in my home village. In fact, they reminded me of agricultural engineers or assistant engineers.

Looking these facts in the face, I thought that this was a wonder that would startle the world. In the past the peasants were ignorant, poor and toiled all their life, but today they have become blessed people who are able to operate machinery and have some scientific knowledge.

In answer to my question concerning the per-hectare grain yield they said that although the figure differed a little between the plain areas and the mountainous areas, it was an average 6.3 tons for maize and 7.2 tons for rice. As for rice grown in paddy fields, 12 or 13 tons per hectare were produced in many areas. This was evidently up to the world standard.

In 1982 north Korea officially announced that it had harvested 9.5 million tons of grain. If the population of north Korea is taken to be 18 million and daily food consumption to be 700 grammes per head, regardless of adult or child, the annual consumption will be

4,590,000 tons. Therefore, 9.5 million tons of grain will last for over two years. Indeed, north Korea has an abundance of grain. But south Korea in the same land imports millions of tons of grain every year. South Korea is poles apart from north Korea.

I remember a conversation I had with a foreigner on my way back to Europe.

After I had introduced myself as a Korean, he told me he was Austrian. We could speak to each other in German. Having become sufficiently acquainted with each other, we told each other where we had been and why. I discovered that he was a leading member of the Austrian Socialist Party and was on his way back from a visit to north Korea.

He remarked that "Korea is No. 1," and said that north Korea was covered by an irrigation network like a chess board and the farming there was good, unaffected by any severe drought. Then he stressed: "I read a book called *Water Control* while I was there. It recommends that farming should be done by controlling not only the temperature of the surface water, but also that of the water beneath the surface. North Korea's agriculture is a world leader." He seemed to take me for a north Korean on a business trip abroad, because I did not tell him that I was a Korean resident in America. Anyhow, I felt my heart swell with national pride.

Prospects for the '80s

The north Korean economy is now making great strides towards the ten long-term objectives for the 1980s. The long-term objectives for economic construction in the 1980s set at the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea are as follows:

- 100 billion kWh of electricity
- 120 million tons of coal
- 15 million tons of steel
- 1.5 million tons of nonferrous metals
- 20 million tons of cement
- 7 million tons of chemical fertilizer
- 1,500 million metres of fabric

5 million tons of seafood

15 million tons of grain and the reclamation of 300,000 hectares of tideland within the next ten years

Although these figures seemed colossal to me, it was difficult for me to comprehend the magnitude they assumed and what they meant. To form a general idea of them, I asked my guide. His reply was to this effect:

First of all, if these 10 long-term objectives are attained, the total annual industrial output value at the end of the 1980s will be 3.1 times greater than the present figure or 1,000 times the 1946 figure, which means that it will only take eight hours to produce the equivalent of the total industrial output for the whole of 1946. Thus, by the end of the 1980s north Korea will rank among the leading nations in the world for per capita output of major industrial products such as steel, coal, cement, chemical fertilizer and seafood.

If 15 million tons of grain are produced north Korea will not only be supplying plenty of animal feed and raw materials for industry, not to mention food, but also have sufficient reserves of food for the people. If the tideland is reclaimed, the fields on slopes will be planted with mulberry and other kinds of trees so that forests of economic value are established. In addition, if 1,500 million metres of fabric are produced, this means that 80 metres of fabric will be produced per head of the population, whether for an adult or a child. If five million tons of seafood are caught, 200 grammes of fish per head of the population or one kilogramme per household will be supplied daily, counting one family as five people, while being able to export a certain amount of all of these goods. It is a pleasure just to hear this.

In short, the economy will reach the level of the advanced countries of the world and change will be brought about in the people's way of life.

However, the question is how these impressive long-term objectives will be achieved. The north Korean people are sure that they can attain them without fail. Their conviction is almost absolute and unshakable, because so far they have accomplished what they had planned and decided upon. People in north Korea

say:

“We have braved untold hardships; everything was destroyed in the war with not a single brick left intact. Now we have strength and our scientific and technical foundations are enough to move mountains and wall off the sea. For us, nothing is impossible.”

This remark is understandable and credible.

During my second visit to north Korea the long-term objectives for the 1980s came up in conversation at a certain gathering where I obtained satisfactory answers I was eager to know to a few practical problems. The first problem was how the enormous electric power of 100 billion kWh could be generated, particularly in view of the fact that the problem of energy was causing great difficulties throughout the world.

But when this was explained to me, I could clearly see how 100 billion kWh of electricity could be generated. As for hydroelectric power, the course of the rivers flowing into the East Sea can be changed to flow into the West Sea and those that empty into the West Sea can be made to flow into East Sea across a high pass by building a succession of dams across them to create a powerful current, which will make it possible to generate 60 billion kWh of electricity.

In addition, 17 billion kWh of electricity can be produced by building tidal water power stations. A large quantity of electricity can be generated by thermal power stations fed by low caloric coal while supplying high caloric coal to other branches of industry. Seen in this light, the production target of 100 billion kWh of electricity is sure to be attained. At the same time the production of 15 million tons of grain is not in doubt because once 300,000 hectares of tideland have been reclaimed on the west coast, this will yield another 2.1 million tons of grain, if the per-hectare yield is estimated to be at least seven tons.

All this convinced me that since coal, iron, nonferrous metals, limestone and other natural resources were abundant, other objectives, too, were fully attainable.

The great nature-harnessing project of reclaiming 300,000 hectares of tideland will be completed by the end of the '80s and it is expected that other objectives, too, will be achieved ahead of

schedule.

I, too, believe that as long as the political leadership in north Korea is patriotic and independent and the people are devoted to their country, the ten long-term objectives of the '80s which are attracting public attention, will surely be achieved.

Then the national strength of north Korea will increase and it will display its great might to the world. This is the pride not only of north Korea but also of the Korean nation.

In such circumstances in north Korea I could perceive the revival and blossoming of the tenacity, the courage and the resourceful, patriotic spirit of our Korean nation and feel confident about its greatness and future. But my heart ached all the more at the tragedy of national division. South Korea is related to north Korea by a common bloodline and the same land. South Korea, too, is rich in natural resources and its people are resourceful and diligent. Although the south Korean economy depends on foreign capital, it operates in our land and it is the wealth which has been created by the toil and moil of our people. Once the country is reunified it will be owned by our people and our nation. When the economies of the north and the south are united, our country will be a great power that wants for nothing.

The Source of the Great Stream of Human Life

In our country there is a saying which goes: "The water downstream is clean when it is clean upstream." I think that the profound meaning of this saying is that when superiors are honest, inferiors, too, are honest and, on the other hand, when superiors are dishonest, inferiors, too, are dishonest.

Once I examined closely the meaning of this saying, applying it to human society and human life.

When I was living in Nanjing, China, in my youth, I once looked at the muddy stream of the Yangzi River, wondering whether it could be made clean and clear. But the whole volume of water of that big, muddy Yangzi River could never be bailed out and replaced with fresh, clear water. Even if this was done it could not

remain clear as long as its headwaters were muddy. I thought that the best way of doing it was to have its headwaters cleared before it flowed downstream. Likewise, I thought and still think that if human society and human life are to be sound, good education should be given to everyone from their youth and they should be trained to be upright citizens. As I say, I still believe this.

In the light of this I have observed with interest education in north Korea as the springhead of the great stream of human life. Here I would like to relate what I have seen.

The State Is the Guardian of the Students

My inspection of educational establishments began with a visit to the June 9 Ryongbuk Girls' Senior Middle School on Kumsong Street in Pyongyang. My first impression of the five-storey school building with a passage through the middle and spacious playground was that it was bright and cozy.

I was welcomed by hundreds of pupils standing in rows. I, an old man, was stirred once again by the brotherly feelings shown me by the children of the homeland.

A man of 40 or so (I learned later that he was a teacher of more than 20 years' standing and that he was nearly 50) introduced himself as the headmaster of the school and very kindly showed me around.

I was told that "June 9" was a meaningful date for the school, and this name had been given in memory of the day when President Kim Il Sung gave on-the-spot guidance to the school. The words "knowledge, high morality and strong physique" that were on the walls of the corridor caught my eye before anything else. I asked him what they meant, wondering if they were construed differently in north Korea. He told me that it meant equipping the younger generation with progressive scientific knowledge, high morality and a strong physique.

If this represents the basic content and the overall objectives of general education in north Korea, education there is no different from anywhere else, I thought.

Laboratories and practical study areas were well arranged to suit

every subject on the curriculum for middle and higher education. This showed that great stress was laid on combining theory with practice. In addition, the school had a gymnasium, swimming pool and a clinic. There was nothing lacking in the facilities.

I entered the music room. Young pupils were singing *At the Nodul Riverside* and other familiar folk songs. I sensed the national emotion that was handed down to the young pupils as well as a certain intimacy and common identity as I thought that although we live under different social systems, we share the same motherland as members of the same nation.

There were many female teachers. Most of them looked young, sturdy and virtuous. At first glance I found the pupils to be lively, well-mannered and not rough in speech or action. Their behaviour was well-mannered. They were generally attentive and not mischievous in class. It was probably because they were girls, I thought. However, they were not stiff but gentle, while their actions were well-coordinated and placid and gave full play to their talent. This pleased me.

The school and its grounds were clean and kept in good order. This was not a hastily arranged display for the benefit of a guest. Judging by the glossy desks and floors in the classrooms, the school seemed to be kept in good order all the time like everything in north Korea. Meticulous care was evident in everything-in setting up a signpost, putting up a motto and placing the furnishings.

After my inspection I talked to the headmaster in his office. He told me about the system of universal eleven-year compulsory education. All the children are admitted to primary school when they reach six years of age and go through four years at primary school and six years at senior middle school. They are given 11 years' education, including one year's preschool education at kindergarten.

Child labour is prohibited by law. Every child without exception has the right and duty to receive 11 years' education, and the state becomes their education guardian.

This last thing he said caught my attention. In fact, compulsory education itself is not something new that deserves particular mention. As is well known, compulsory primary education is in

force in many countries. So, clearly, as far as compulsory education itself is concerned, that of north Korea is nothing new extraordinary. As for the length of compulsory education in north Korea, it is not superior, compared with the world or European standards, but there is no doubt about its quality.

I knew nothing about the one-year preschool education. I was dubious about its propriety. But let me leave this problem for a while.

What is particularly important in enforcing compulsory education is the practical support that the state offers. Even though compulsory education may be established by law, if it is not backed up materially by the state, it is meaningless and no more than a deceptive practise on the part of the state. In my opinion, education that is not free of charge is not compulsory education. In some countries compulsory education is allegedly enforced, but school fees are paid by the parents. It is something like a rice-cake in a picture for the lowest common people. I wanted to understand without prejudice the details of compulsory education in north Korea.

I asked the headmaster of the school.

“May I assume that by the state becoming an education guardian, it means that the state bears the cost of schooling for all the students for 11 years?”

He gave me a coherent answer:

“Eleven-year compulsory education in our country is completely free compulsory education for which the students do not pay a penny.”

According to him all the pupils from kindergarteners to senior middle school students are provided with textbooks and school things by the state for next to nothing and even the costs of experiments and practical work are borne by the state. Not only that, pupils are provided with uniforms for every season at a very low price with state subsidy. In the case of a family that has more than two pupils, the state supplies them with school uniforms for next to nothing, with a greater discount. Orphaned students or those whose parents are disabled are issued with clothes, shoes and other daily necessities as well as reference books and other school

things by the state free of charge. In addition if they lodge in a dormitory, their board is paid by the state. Thanks to these state benefits parents do not pay one penny for their children's education until they reach the working age of 16. So, parents with many children, too, have no worry about the cost of educating them.

After a short pause the headmaster seemed to be reminded of something and went on to say:

“Free education in our country embraces not only eleven-year compulsory education, but also college and university education. College and university students even receive a scholarship from the state.”

“On a nationwide scale, the number of students is very large, isn't it?”



After-school practice at the Students and Children's Palace

The headmaster replied:

“At the moment there are 5.6 million students in our country, accounting for a third of the population. They are all being educated at state expense.”

If he was telling the truth, compulsory education in north Korea is of a high standard the like of which is rarely found in the rest of the world, I thought. At the time I wanted it to be true. Later the

reality I saw in north Korea convinced me that it really was true.

It occurred to me that north Korea had enforced completely free education not because it had the funds.

According to my guide, immediately after liberation when the economic situation in the country was very difficult, the state took measures to exempt the children of poor families from paying school fees and gave scholarships to college and university students. In the hard times after the war it first put universal compulsory primary education into effect and then went over to universal compulsory secondary education and made that free of charge. In 1959, the universal free education system was introduced under which all the educational establishments in the country including universities, offered education with the costs borne by the state.

Our parents, though poverty-stricken and hungry, gave their children education, even if it meant hawking water. Even in the 1950s when the economic situation was very difficult, the state, reflecting the desire of the parents, made sure that all the young people and children without exception were sent to school, which meant a huge financial burden. Attaching importance and giving priority to education, the state takes the utmost care of the younger generation and brings them up to be capable people. The state is the true guardian of the students in north Korea.

Immediately after liberation the problem of pencils was placed as an item on the agenda of the first meeting of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea. This fact itself was symbolic, showing graphically the attitude of the state towards education.

The state started to build schools, kindergartens and nurseries on the war debris when there was not a whole brick to be found. This showed clearly the staunch will and firm resolve with which the state tackled the problem of educating the younger generation as their true parent.

“The best things for the children and all the fine things for our sons and daughters!”—this was the slogan adopted by the state. Shouting this slogan, the entire people went out to build schools. They shared the common belief that the education of the younger generation was an important matter decisive of the fate of the nation. This represented solid support for the state as the students’

guardian and was the source of its inexhaustible strength.

Another central problem in education in north Korea was its content. As I have said before, the ultimate goal of education in north Korea is to bring up people who are knowledgeable, morally sound and physically strong. What then is the man equipped with these?

The headmaster gave me a detailed account. To summarize his explanation as I understood it, it means a completely independent man who has his own opinions about his social and individual affairs, public and private matters and thinks and acts according to his own judgement.

Then I raised an awkward question, as I had been taken in by evil propaganda that described the education in north Korea as standardized.

“The education in north Korea is collectivist education. So, how can it produce people with such independent views?”

After looking at me, the headmaster spoke again. According to him education in north Korea attaches importance to the cultivation of the collectivist spirit in the students, but by no means does it neglect the development of individuality. Proceeding from the viewpoint that solid collectivity is comprised of individually developed people, north Korea sets its basic education policy to be to help the independent development of each student, he stressed.

He said;

“Choe Dok Sin, you seem to have been mistaken. If you want to know how our children are growing up, you should conduct another systematic inspection from the bottom upwards. You had better do it in this order—maternity hospital, nursery school, kindergarten, primary school...”

I cast a slightly strained glance at my guide.

The guide's ready smile showed that he shared the headmaster's opinion.

So, I started my inspection of education institutions again, starting with a visit to the maternity hospital. I have already mentioned this. After visiting that, I went to the September 15 Weekly Nursery.

Nursery and Kindergarten

I visited the September 15 Weekly Nursery which is in the centre of Pyongyang. It consisted of a few 4- or 5-storey buildings set in extensive grounds. The nursery is said to accommodate over a thousand children. It takes care of children from the age of one year and seven months to three years and the children of women who frequently go on official journeys because of their profession. It mainly takes charge of the children of service workers: women reporters, actresses, women teachers and doctors. They take their children to the nursery on Monday and collect them on Saturday. Children are fed 1,500 to 1,600 calories a day. As far as I know, the food is very nutritious. They are not taught to read and write at this stage. They are mainly given visual education and object lessons. It would be more accurate to call this establishment a nursery school which takes care of children in place of their parents and gives primary attention to their education as distinct from the creches that tend babies in other countries.

When I saw the different aspects of the management of the nursery it became clear to me that primary attention was given to education.

The directress of the nursery showed me round, quoting a saying "What is learned in the cradle is carried to the grave." She stressed that in light of their ages, the children were passing time which should not be neglected in their education and that, in one sense, it was a most important period. Her remark concerning the springhead of the great stream of human life which I have mentioned I found easy to accept.

During the "lesson in the mother tongue" the nursery teacher read words and the class recited them together. It was designed to teach them proper pronunciation, I supposed. They have counting and music lessons, too. They read musical notes fairly well, conducting vocal drills with "do, re, mi, fa..." Time and semi-time were marked by a picture of an apple and half an apple respectively so they could understand easily. It was wonderful. I am nearly 70 but I do not know how to read music. These young children could read music. How wonderful!

I went into the recreation room. Children were playing volleyball

or basketball, driving cars, cycling or swinging. Some were riding on a mini train that ran along a rail and some others were on board a plane. Each of them was absorbed in his amusement. It was a marvellous sight.

The nurse who was looking after the children greeted our party warmly and said to the children:

“Children. A grandfather from faraway America has come here to see you.”

This was a sort of introduction to the children.

With loud cries the children rushed up to me and clung to my arms, legs and neck. All of them pressed their apple-like cheeks to my chest. I was at a loss as to whom to stroke first. I was assailed by a feeling of blood kinship, as if I was meeting my grandsons and granddaughters.

From my inspection of this nursery I could see clearly that purposeful efforts were being made to equip nursery children with “knowledge, morality and strong physique” through lessons in the mother tongue, music, gymnastics and morality.

According to the “Law on the Nursing and Upbringing of Children” every nursery school child starts a basic course of growth which runs from the nursery through to kindergarten, the directress added.

There is no other country than north Korea that has drawn up a law on the nursing and upbringing of children at state expense and laid the groundwork for education from the nursery, so I imagined.

The directress of the nursery said that in north Korea there are over 39,000 nurseries and over 21,000 kindergartens. Assuming that each nursery or kindergarten accommodates over 50 children, the number of charges at nurseries and kindergartens will amount to three million. This means that almost every child is looked after at a nursery and kindergarten at state expense. In the case of a family that is able to look after its children, the state advises the parents to keep them at home, but they still bring them to the nursery or kindergarten. This is out of consideration for their education.

I inspected the “Songnim Baby’s Palace.” Again, I could see there how the groundwork for education is laid in north Korea. This

palace is in the city of Songnim where the Hwanghae Iron Works is located. It is an educational institution in which a nursery school and a kindergarten are housed. Its building is magnificent and well furnished. It deserves the name of palace.

It has 240 nursery governesses and kindergarten teachers to take care of the 1,500 children of the workers at the iron works.

I got the impression that the state is doing all that it can for the future masters.

I took greater interest in the kindergarten.

It had senior and junior classes. Here, too, the children of the junior class were not taught their letters. The main stress was laid on object lessons and visual education. In their daily schedule several hours were allotted to singing and gymnastics.

The senior class at the kindergarten seemed to be designed for one-year preschool compulsory education (that is what kindergarten education is called in north Korea).

In north Korea preschool education, that is, education at kindergarten, is set as the first stage of education as distinct from Western countries where school education is regarded as such. Strictly speaking, education begins from the nursery stage. At this stage the child makes the new discovery of its human intellectual faculties.

I was greatly impressed by what a young kindergarten teacher told me when I was leaving the Songnim Baby's Palace.

"Look, if a mother has three children, the amount of work she can do is of no benefit to the state; she is more a burden on it. However, this does not matter to the state. It is more important for the state to provide people with jobs and a living and to bring up the younger generation to be pillars of the future."

"Right! That's it," I thought.

At both the September 15 Weekly Nursery and the Songnim Baby's Palace I admired exquisite performances by little players, singers and dancers and recitals by talented children.

The most important thing I noted during my inspection of both the kindergarten and the nursery was that solid groundwork was laid for their all-round development from their early years and that

every effort was made to develop the slightest talent that was revealed, that is, a child who was good at music was encouraged to apply himself to music and those who were good at sport, did sport.

I could not help it, but the myth about the “standardized” education in north Korea that I referred to gradually began to be shattered for me.

A King and His Palace

There is a 13-storey building rising on Changdae Hill in the centre of Pyongyang. A 200-metre long straight road runs from the gateway to the porch with fountains down the middle and a lane and a pavement on each side and its grounds are covered with a lawn. This area forms a park. This is the well-known Pyongyang Students and Children’s Palace. A palace presupposes a king or queen. However, a king or queen wearing a gold crown and a gold girdle could not be seen there but, instead, only boys and girls of ten or so were going in and out. In north Korea boys and girls are called kings and queens of the country. Hence the name, the Students and Children’s Palace.

Through my inspection of the palace, I appreciated once again the great concern and solicitude shown by the state for the younger generation. I want to mention in advance that my myth about the education in north Korea being standardized which had already begun to be shaken was dealt a fatal blow there.

In the palace there are a well-furnished theatre, over 200 study and practice rooms and a library stocked with hundreds of thousands of books. Every day over ten thousand children are said to visit it to take part in various activities.

According to the director of the palace, it was the biggest building the state had ever built at the time of its opening in September 1963. At that time the scars of war had not been healed completely, machines had to be procured and a new life had to be constructed. There was a lot of demand for funds, but they were severely limited.

Nevertheless, 500 million *won* equivalent to the cost of building five large factories, are said to have been spent on building the palace. Wonderful! 20 years ago the palace was the largest building

in the city, but now it seems dwarfed by the buildings that surround it. So, a new, more majestic children's hall is planned, the director added.

We entered the lift. It was rather a large one, but not the most modern.

This lift was the first of its kind to be produced by Korean industry and was sent to the palace for the children, the guide said, and it had not been replaced so that the children would remember its significance.

The director went on to say:

“We live for the future and spare nothing for it. As the parents devote their all for the future of their children, so the country does its best for the future of the nation.”

In north Korea, he said, similar students and children's palaces are found in Hamhung and Kaesong and there are children's halls in different parts of the country.

According to him, many children's camps and houses, large and beautiful, have been built on Mts. Kungang, Myohyang, Paekdu and other famous mountains and at the seaside including Wonsan and Nampo, for the training of students and children.

The Students and Children's Palace has hundreds of rooms furnished with various study facilities, laboratories and equipment, which boys and girls can use freely according to their aptitude, ability, taste and turn of mind. An inspection of all the rooms is said to take two or three days. So, I made a round of just a few.

There are many rooms designed for teaching the piano, violin and other Western musical instruments and kayagum, haegum and other national musical instruments. There are also dance halls and dress-making rooms where dozens of sewing machines hum. When I entered one room, I found girls engrossed in embroidery. There is one room where the children can learn to handle a vehicle, with driving simulators installed.

After practising driving in this room, they go out to the practice ground and sit behind a steering wheel. I was shown into the room designed to teach astronomy and tried an astronomical telescope. In addition, I visited gymnastics and machine-tool rooms. They were all most impressive. The facilities for extra-curricular study were so

extensive as to surpass all imagination. The palace was alive with students throughout my hours of inspection. The children put on a colourful show in the palatial theatre. Their performance was as good as that of professional actors.

During my inspection of the palace I witnessed the scrupulous plan and intentions of the state to bring the individual talents of each boy and girl into full play and thus help them to pioneer by themselves the way to apply their talents to the service of the state. Through their activities at the palace the students consolidate what they have learnt at school and in the course of this discover their talents under the kind guidance of the teachers and set their minds to developing them.

Standardization? I will not mention it again. Talking about fabrication is nothing more than a waste of time and energy.

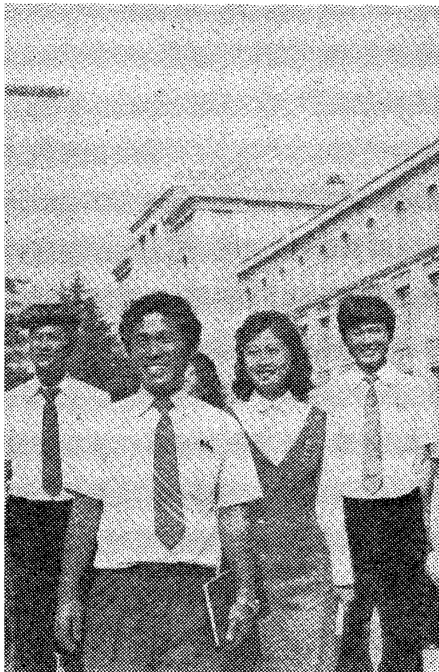
The illuminated sign on the roof of the Pyongyang Students and Children's Palace says: "There is nothing in the world for us to envy!"

There is virtually nothing that the children of north Korea lack.

If the man who wants for nothing is to be called "king," north Korea must be the land of "kings." These kings are the pillars on which a paradise will be built and they represent the future of the motherland who will reliably carry forward the national lineage.

On the Way to Making Everyone an Intellectual

Kim Il Sung University can be called a major cadre training centre of north Korea. This is not only because graduates of this university play an important role in all spheres of society, but also because after liberation this university spawned many others. [08]



Kim Il Sung University, a grand palace of learning

The university is situated on a picturesque site by the Taedong River and covers an area of 1,500,000 square metres. It is composed of the 9-storey building No. 1 with a floor space of 46,000 square metres, the 22-storey building No. 2 with a floor space of 52,000 square metres and a library stocked with two million books which has a seating capacity of 1,200.

In addition, it has a museum, hospital, publishing house, printing house, laboratory, optical apparatus factory and hostels which can accommodate several thousand students. There are over 12,000 students there.

I was greeted kindly by Professor Chi Chang Ik, Chancellor of the university, at the entrance. He is a luminary in professional cadres in north Korea and a teacher of long standing at the university. He has taken part in international meetings of scientists on many occasions.

Accompanied by Chancellor Chi, I observed classes in progress, and visited the museum and library. I met Professor and Doctor of History Pak Si Hyong, who came originally from south Korea, in his

research room.

During my discussion with Doctor Pak Si Hyong, Chancellor Chi Chang Ik recalled wistfully:

“In the difficult situation immediately after liberation President Kim Il Sung sent people to Seoul to fetch a large number of intellectuals. He showed such particular concern so that they would devote their knowledge to the training of national cadres. Even now some of them are working here and are respected by the students.”

Chancellor Chi spoke in detail about the education policy of the university and its current state.

The Chancellor's account and my inspection of the university and its surroundings largely convinced me that Kim Il Sung University is the centre of the Juche-orientated education of north Korea.

To begin with, I saw that the university was opposed to sycophancy and dogmatism in education and held fast to its own national viewpoint.

In teaching, the main stress was laid on things of our own nation and country so that the students were well-versed in things Korean. The Korean nation is supposed to create wealth and live for ever in its own land. President Kim Il Sung said that Koreans should conduct the revolution in Korea and even when the communist society was built, they should live in the land of Korea, not in Siberia. To this end, clearly Koreans must be well versed in the history and current situation of the Korean nation, and university education should naturally contribute to the solution of the difficult and complex problems facing the nation in accordance with the actual conditions of the country.

In south Korea, because the bad idea of disdaining our nation prevails, only those who have been to America to study and can speak a little English are regarded as intelligent and only American things are deemed to have any value, but north Korea is critical of this practice.

North Korea, too, sends a considerable number of students abroad to study, I have heard. But studying abroad is not something they boast of. It means only that they bear a heavy responsibility to contribute to the prosperity of the motherland with the knowledge

they acquire there. The leading role in building the state falls to graduates from domestic universities, for they have received education that is suited to the actual conditions of the country and have the best understanding of their duty to the state.

Those who have studied abroad only cooperate with home graduates in the specific fields of science and technology.

I was told that Secretary Kim Jong Il, whom fellow countrymen in north Korea follow as the successor to the cause of President Kim Il Sung, also graduated from Kim Il Sung University.

No university, except the University of Foreign Studies, has foreign teachers. Professors and lecturers are all our fellow countrymen. Even immediately after liberation when north Korea was short of scholars and teachers and needed the strength of intellectuals to build the state, just as in other fields, foreigners were employed only where they were badly needed and in small numbers at that.

From Chancellor Chi, I got a general idea of how education was conducted in domestic universities.

According to him, in north Korea there are over 170 universities and colleges including more than 20 in Pyongyang, and each province has universities of agriculture, medicine and education and a communist university which are as well-equipped as those in the capital. That there is an equal number of universities and colleges in each province has a lot of advantages: it means that the provinces meet their needs for cadres themselves and conduct education to suit the specific features of the area, the actual conditions, climate and soil and, moreover, ensures the harmonious development of the rural areas. As a result, north Korea now has a large contingent of one million intellectuals whereas it had less than 100 qualified engineers in total at the time of August 15 liberation, he said.

In north Korea today the objective of education is to train all people to acquire the consciousness of independence and creative ability. Pointing out that this objective could be attained completely when the whole of society would be intellectualized, Chancellor Chi Chang Ik added:

“Making the whole society intellectual means that our people go

through higher education to reach the standard of university graduate and rise to the highest peak of modern civilization. It is not an ideal for the distant future but a task posed as a question for today.”

This made me think of the soaring ambition of north Korea in education.

The people are given education for their whole life from nursery school to the age of retirement, and it is free education for everyone without exception, isn't it? I have heard it is not uncommon in north Korea that all the members of a family are university students—grandfather attending a university correspondence course, father—a factory university, and sons—regular universities.

After all, the aim is to make all the people highly qualified intellectuals of the standard of university graduate or above.

There are hundreds of nations in the world, but is there any nation without illiterates or a nation all the members of which have a similar level of general knowledge? But north Korea has set an immediate task of making all its people go through a course of higher education.

Along with the normal system of higher education, the study-while-you-work system of higher education (factory colleges, evening classes and university correspondence courses) is in force. I witnessed the making of the whole nation intellectual being transformed into reality. Recently I read a leading article in the newspapers that said that the Central Committee of the Workers' Party had sent a congratulatory message to all the miners from a tunneling squad at the Ryongyang Mine in South Hamgyong Province when they obtained their diplomas as engineers and assistant engineers from the study-while-you-work college or university at the site.

My inspection of Kim Il Sung University helped me greatly to understand, albeit in general terms, the impressive development of Korean society that is on the way to making everyone an intellectual.

In connection with this, I would like to say a word about the Grand People's Study House. Situated on Namsan Hill in the heart of Pyongyang its external appearance is of a traditional Korean

architectural style. Apparently it is one of the largest buildings in north Korea.

My guide told me that its name meant “study house for all the people.” Although they said it was a place of study for everyone, I supposed that it would not be accessible to all the people without restriction. It is magnificent and stately with its columns finished beautifully with marble and high-quality building materials and its floor is spread with gorgeous carpets. Moreover, it has service facilities that were provided at a huge cost. If the reader requires a book, it is instantly brought before him by a computer system. It is too awe-inspiring for anyone wanting to read books to enter freely. I thought there must be some kind of restriction (say, admission fee), and asked quietly:

“By the way, how do they cover expenses?”

This was a roundabout way of asking about admission charges. But the guide who accompanied me seemed to have guessed what I meant.

“No fee is charged, sir. This is a place where everyone can study and benefit from free education.”

That’s right! I smiled wryly to myself on discovering how superficial was my knowledge of the system of free education in north Korea. Free education is not confined to regular education, it is applied without restriction wherever people study. Just as the students and children’s palaces serve as the main centres of social education and extracurricular study in the system of general education, so the Grand People’s Study House serves as such in system of the higher education for making the entire people intellectual, I thought. The Grand People’s Study House could just as well be called a university correspondence course serving to make everyone intellectual.

Indeed, north Korea has established a well-organized system of human training comprising the maternity hospital where babies are born, nurseries, kindergartens, primary schools, middle schools, colleges, universities and orphanages. Moreover, this is supported by a system of completely free education and the system of universal 11-year compulsory education enforced at state expense. So, versatile and capable people are trained in large numbers and

this affords a guarantee that every member of society will be a highly qualified intellectual in the not too distant future.

It is not by chance that foreigners call north Korea a “land of education” or a “land of learning” where all the people have the right to be educated as well as the right to eat and are under an obligation to reach the standard of university graduate by studying.

There is a saying “Knowledge is strength” or “Knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness.”

I can confidently affirm that the secret of the great national strength of north Korea lies in its training and education of the people.

My fellow countrymen in north Korea have shaken off their centuries-old backwardness and poverty and have built an independent welfare society in one half of our country by giving full play to their inexhaustible wisdom and strength. This I realized was the outcome of the man-centred politics of prizing man above anything else and training him to be the most powerful being and, in particular, the fruition of its excellent system of education. In this sense, education in north Korea is the source of its present great national strength, the living proof of this power and its demonstration, I believe.

Just imagine. Little north Korea with a population of less than 20 million provides entirely free education for 5.6 million students and the state appropriates enormous sums of money to pay in part for their uniforms and school things. North Korea has 170 institutions of higher education and has put massive state investment into building the students and children’s palaces, Grand People’s Study House, numerous students’ halls, camps and many other large-scale non-productive establishments. The country which had only some 100 engineers at the time of liberation now has a large army of intellectuals over one million strong. What is this if not a manifestation of its great national strength and a living testimony to its might!

I am sure it is no misjudgment to say that I see in this the greatness and bright future of our nation.

Solid National Unity

The national strength of a state may be considered from two angles-material and mental power, and the more essential of these is mental power. This is my unshaken belief. National power means the might of the nation. Material power is dependent on how the nation builds up its economy and how much material wealth it creates. Therefore it is considered, in the long run, to depend on the mental power of the nation. Hence, while studying the national strength of the north, I paid great attention to education there as well as to economic power, and made a fairly close observation of education.

I found that education in north Korea was really unusual. There was no doubt that those who were given such education would display strong mental power, when they entered working.

While studying the situation in north Korea, I saw that everyone had strong mental power and their efforts were pooled to make a greater force. This was the united strength of the people.

An old Chinese saying goes: "A good opportunity is not as good as geographical advantage; and the latter is secondary to the harmony of the nation." This tells the truth that nothing in the world is stronger than the united strength of the people.

The north Korean people have great strength, that is, united strength. This has served as the motive force which has given rise to a paradise in north Korea where the national spirit dwells and the people are enjoying a happy life all alike with no distinction between rich and poor.

Perfect Order

There was a snug cinema attached to the hotel where I stayed in Pyongyang. It was good place to watch films.

Here I often saw north Korean films. One day I was invited to see the documentary film "The Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea."

Before I touch on my impressions of the film, I would like to say one thing: When I was in Seoul, I saw a film showing the demonstration of Pyongyang citizens in celebration of the Fifth Congress of the WPK.

The south Korean authorities showed the film only to a limited number of important people for “information’s sake.” I suppose that the showing of the demonstration of the north Korean people was intended to impress the audience with the “threat of southward aggression” and inspire in them anti-north feelings.

But what was the result? Even those who were trusted and shown the film were overwhelmed by the great spirit and steel-like unity of the north Korean people and they showed signs of being envious.

Warned by this, the south Korean authorities prohibited its further screening.

Because I knew about this, something which was unknown to the public and so could not be laughed off, I went immediately to the cinema in curiosity to see what changes had taken place in the subsequent years.

The film was in colour. The tone of the colours was bright and vivid. Its portrayal of the scene was far better than that of the mass demonstration held in honour of the Fifth Party Congress which I had seen in Seoul.

This time it was a demonstration of one million people. It was as graceful and impressive as an art production and in terms of organization, unity and discipline it was superior to a military exercise.

The people marched in perfect order in some 40 files. They moved proudly like surging waves or a huge mountain moving, shaking the world. It was a perfect representation of unity. Anyway it was quite different from anything I had ever seen in Europe or America. It was a demonstration of an incomparably higher dimension. At the end of the show I left the cinema and paced back and forth considering my impressions of the film. Although I had served for a long time in the army as a commanding officer, I wondered whether I had ever had such a well-organized troop under my command. I told the caretaker of the guest house whom I knew that the film of the Sixth Congress of the WPK was good. At this he said that other foreign guests had also admired the film, and added:

“A few years ago when President Tito of Yugoslavia paid a visit

to our country, riding together with the great leader in the same car on his way from the airport, he was cheered by the citizens of Pyongyang lining the streets. He was very impressed by the cheering crowds, as I learned later, and apparently said to the great leader: 'Comrade President, yours is a truly great people. With such a people, there is nothing to fear and nothing is impossible in the world.'" I am sure his words came from the bottom of his heart. The cheering masses must have gathered from different quarters. However, at the mere sight of them President Tito is said to have been impressed by the appearance of the north Korean people united together. I wondered what he would have said, if he had seen the demonstration of one million people.

Later I was once again struck with admiration at the sight of the mass game of the students and children in Pyongyang City.

I found this more impressive than the film presenting the mass demonstration, probably because I saw the mass game with my own eyes and it was enacted by boys and girls.

To be honest, when I was told about the mass game, I thought it would be a kind of free gymnastics performed by several thousand students, but in fact it was like a big art festival, not only because it was on a large scale and performed by 50,000 students, but also because it demonstrated their organization and capacity for artistic unity without a flaw.

The mass game portrayed the revolutionary activities of President Kim Il Sung in historical sequence, and with each scene hundreds or thousands of performers appeared all dressed alike and moved rhythmically together, while in the stand in the background letters and pictures were depicted in vivid colours, the execution of which was perfect.

For instance, in the scene "triumphal return home" the image of President Kim Il Sung delivering a speech on his triumphal return home was portrayed in the background along with the masses who were warmly welcoming him, waving bouquets, while in the foreground several thousand students formed a huge flower basket with others bowing politely beside it. Those in the stand behind worked so accurately and those in the foreground moved in such an orderly manner that their performance seemed not to be done by men but by some sort of mechanical device. The mass game lasted

for about two hours. I felt as if I was seeing a “magic glass.”

The ability of the young students is so high that there is no need to refer to the grown-ups, I think.

I saw clearly the organization and capacity for unity of my fellow countrymen in the north through the mass demonstration of Pyongyang citizens and the mass game enacted by the students and children.

True, the north Korean people seemed to live collectively and move in an orderly manner anyway.

In the north the whole society seems to live in unity like a single organism and everyone seems to discharge his or her duty to suit his or her position without the slightest deviation, so that the function of an organism is performed satisfactorily.

My candid impression was that the people were united.

Voluntary Order

What then is the source of such strong organization and capacity for unity of the north Korean people? Can it be ascribed to the rule of force as they say in south Korea and abroad? Can it be attributed to iron discipline, so to speak? On cursory examination, one may judge that the people of north Korea live beneath an iron discipline.

One may think that they are only mechanical robots who simply obey orders and commands, and not men with an individual personality.

There was something hopeful in the smiling faces of the people on the street, men and women, young and old. What did this mean? During my stay in north Korea I came in contact with or met many people, but none of them looked worried or gloomy. Those who took part in the mass demonstration and mass game that I have just mentioned all had bright smiles on their faces and looked full of delight.

In no way could they be considered mechanical robots under an iron discipline.

It is impossible to force people to wear a certain expression. No amount of whipping can force a slave to smile like a freeman. I had to understand a new ethic of life unknown to me thus far in the

bright looks of the north Korean people who were living collectively.

It reflected their free will to take part voluntarily in establishing discipline and order in the community. In other words, it may be called a great capacity for unity.

From what I saw and heard, I realized the great importance the north Korean people attach to voluntary discipline in life.

Here is an episode which took place when the arrangements for the above-mentioned mass demonstration were being made in honour of the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea. At first the organizers of the demonstration are said to have feared whether one million people could be mobilized for a large-scale demonstration. But this anxiety was unfounded. On hearing that a demonstration was to be held, a large number of people from the work places and residential quarters in Pyongyang volunteered to take part in. Even the workers at factories quite away from Pyongyang wanted to participate. The total number of volunteers far exceeded the number required. For various reasons the number of demonstrators was not to exceed one million. So, the number had to be limited.

However, no organization or individual wanted to comply. Everyone considered it a pity to drop out of the demonstration.

Only after persistent persuasion and explanation was it possible to fix the number of participants at one million.

So now the question arises of what the willingness of the north Korean people to take part in this collective action means in fact. I think it derives from their view of life, that they as individuals cannot exist without the collective and that their life as an individual human life is inconceivable apart from the communal life of the society and nation.

I can fully understand their view of life through that slogan "One for all, and all for one" which is frequently seen on the streets of north Korea.

This slogan is unusual yet very interesting. The phrase "One for all" may make one think of totalitarianism, because it is similar to that with which the despots of former days or the autocratic rulers of today force unconditional subordination and sacrifice on their

nation on the pretext of the “national interests.”

But the north Korean slogan has the additional “all for one.” This means that society or the entire nation serves all the individuals of which it is composed. Further, it may be understood in the sense that when the fate of an individual is ignored, there will be difficulties in the fate of the whole nation and that the aim of society and the state is to take care of each individual. It may be said to be a people-centred principle. Anyhow it can be called the expression of the man-centred idea.

As seen above, since the north Korean slogan has the basic premise “all for one” the phrase “one for all” means the voluntary involvement of the people in the collective which is quite different from totalitarian coercion, I believe.

As an illustration of this, I would like to relate two poignant stories I heard in north Korea.

A young man was seriously hurt while working on a construction site and his life was in danger, but a party of about ten doctors flew from Pyongyang by helicopter to the scene to save him and gave him intensive treatment. At the news of this, people in different parts of the country showed deep concern for him and sent a variety of things which would help in his treatment, I am told.

Thanks to the concern of the nation, so to speak, miraculously the youth was saved and recovered his health in about 60 days

In an out-of-way village a young pupil was crippled in an accident. After consulting the villagers his family moved closer to his school so that he could attend. His teacher and classmates, in turn, carried the crippled pupil to and from school on their backs for about ten years, and in this way he grew up to be a technician.

The people who live in such a social atmosphere evidently regard one and the whole, that is, the individual and society, as not holding conflicting interests, but as being in harmony with each other.

Discipline established by force is provisional and the human community based on this kind of discipline is a congregation which is liable at any moment to disintegrate. But voluntary discipline is eternal and the community of people based on such a discipline and order is indestructibly sound. The unity of the north Korean people

is solid and belongs to the latter case, I think.

The Social Structure of Unity

Human relations that are based on the principle “One for all, and all for one” are truly ideal relations. The national unity that is founded on these relations is desirable for every one. However, this ideal cannot be attained spontaneously simply by wishing for it.

The socio-political climate must be right for the ideal to strike root and blossom.

If the national unity of north Korea is so solid, the reason for it must be found in the social structure of north Korea, I believe.

The emblem of the Workers’ Party of Korea, the ruling party in north Korea, is unusual. What I mean is that it is quite unlike the emblem of the party or the national flag of any other country in the communist bloc.

The national flag of the Soviet Union and those of other countries and the emblems of the communist parties in those countries usually have the design of a hammer and a sickle. They symbolize the worker and the farmer respectively.

However, the emblem of the Workers’ Party in north Korea has, in addition to the hammer and sickle, the picture of a writing brush. The writing brush is the symbol of the intellectual, so north Koreans say. They explain to me that it is the policy of the WPK and the goal of socialism in north Korea to forge unity between workers, peasants and intellectuals.

After hearing this explanation, I examined the emblem of the WPK. It suggested the following to me: The emblems of other countries of the communist bloc have only the design of a hammer and sickle, while the emblem of the WPK has a writing brush placed between them. This can be interpreted in the sense that the intellectual not only joins the alliance of the worker and peasant, but plays an important role in it.

North Korean officials did not actually say that, but that is how I interpreted it.

Intellectuals fall into the propertied social strata. I don’t mean that today’s intellectuals in north Korea form a propertied social

strata, but that the intellectuals at the time of the foundation of the WPK immediately after liberation came from the propertied classes above the middle class. Thus the socialism of the north can be understood as not meaning one which gives prominence to workers and peasants alone and excludes the propertied classes, but socialism under which the former join hands with the latter.

In other words, it means socialism which promotes the unity of not only workers and peasants but also of the entire nation.

In fact, proceeding from this idea of national unity, north Korea is said to carry out a revolution of a specific character and to have established a socialist system with its own specific features. The socialist system was established in the late '50s in north Korea. At that time, in reorganizing agriculture along cooperative lines, north Korea pursued the policy of remoulding wealthy peasants instead of eliminating them, and in the case of national capitalists they were not dispossessed or eliminated but educated so that they would voluntarily join the socialist cooperative economy.

I believe this shows that north Korea has attached great importance to national unity instead of pursuing a one-sided class policy structurally since the very birth of the socialist system.

The attitude of the north Korean authorities towards intellectuals hailing from the propertied classes should be judged from this point of view.

It is a commonly accepted idea in south Korea and in Korean communities overseas that under communist rule in north Korea, intellectuals are slighted because of their propertied class origin and that even if some of them are given an important post, it is only a temporary appointment and some day they will be fired.

But things are actually quite different in the north. In north Korea intellectuals have not been neglected, but actually trusted, well treated and accepted not only immediately after liberation but also after the establishment of the socialist system.

The chairman of the State Construction Commission of the Administration Council of North Korea (the minister in charge of construction) is a son of a major landowner from Kangnam County, South Pyongan Province, and he graduated from university under Japanese imperialist rule, and the Minister of the Metallurgical

Industry is a son of a major landowner from Ryonggang County, so I have been told.

The famous Doctor Li Sung Gi returned to Seoul after graduating from the well-known Kyoto Imperial University in Japan and then came over to north Korea where he completed his research into vinylon.

He has achieved great success enjoying the special confidence of the north Korean authorities and is now given VIP treatment, they say. He has been awarded every available title of honour for a scientist as well as the title of Labour Hero and was elected as a deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly. This indicates the deep confidence placed in him by the north Korean authorities.

In north Korea, immediately after liberation some narrow-minded people tried to reject the intellectuals, finding fault with their propertied class origin and other things, so I am told. When he heard this, however, President Kim Il Sung severely denounced the rejection of intellectuals as an act of factionalism.

I believe the solid unity and cohesion of an entire nation can be achieved only in a land of socialism where national unity is prized above all else.

It is President Kim Il Sung who has established the socialist system of a national character in the north. In north Korea, under the guidance of President Kim Il Sung, the great cause of national revival has been successfully carried out and a welfare society for everyone has been established.

It is not by chance that the whole nation holds President Kim Il Sung in high regard and is united around him with one will and one purpose.

Solid cohesion presupposes a centre. So, the unity of the north Korean people around President Kim Il Sung is natural and strong, I believe.

The Nation and Leadership

The Brilliant Commander Who Led the Anti-Japanese Struggle

First Reception

I visited north Korea twice and enjoyed the privilege of being received by President Kim Il Sung on each occasion. His reception marked the climax of each visit to north Korea. I think that through these interviews with President Kim Il Sung I came to recognize the source of the marvellous change made in north Korea, see the past, present and future of the Korean nation from a new viewpoint and find out, though belatedly, the position I should occupy in the national community bound with it by a common fate.

I would like to refer to the first interview, which was the most impressive.

I was making a tour of Mt. Myohyang during my first visit to north Korea when I was informed by a cadre accompanying me that the President could spare the time to meet me. I left for a guest house on the shore of a lake a short distance north of Pyongyang.

It was nearing evening, so I stayed at the guest house overnight. The next morning I was driven to meet President Kim Il Sung.

I had harboured an earnest desire to meet the President from the first day on my trip to north Korea.

I was eager to know, first of all, the President's views on the country's reunification and the future of our nation. Moreover, when I saw the progress that had been made there in construction,

which defied description, my desire to see the leader who had taken north Korea onto such a high plane became more ardent.

At the same time, although it was a personal affair, I wished to express as a man, in all conscience, my gratitude to the President for taking good care of my father in the latter years of his life which he had spent in north Korea. I was told that not only my father, but also the south Korean politicians who went over to north Korea following the June 25 incident had been taken care of by the President. But recalling the erstwhile special relationship between the President and my family which was then unknown to the public, I imagined that the President might have shown particular concern for my father.

As I mentioned before in the first chapter, in the early 1920s when my family was living in Manchuria, my father had been headmaster of the Hwasong Uisuk School in Huadian County, Jilin Province.

President Kim Il Sung studied at this school for a short time in 1926. As I came to know later, when his father Kim Hyong Jik who was the chairman of the Korean National Association, the anti-Japanese underground organization, and the leader of the national liberation movement who was widely known in Korea and Manchuria, passed away in June that year in Fusong, the President had been admitted to the Hwasong Uisuk School through the good offices of the close friends of his late father, and so the relationship of teacher and pupil was formed between my father and him.

During her life in Seoul my mother knew through my father that General Kim Il Sung, who had taken the reins of government in north Korea, had once been a student at the Hwasong Uisuk School. According to her, he was called Kim Song Ju in those days. She remembered him after liberation because he had frequented our home with my father to read books and take meals with him, and my mother used to do some washing for him.

Recalling those days, my mother said:

“One day I searched for student Song Ju’s spare underwear to wash, but couldn’t find it. I had been told that it had been made and given him by his mother when he left for the Hwasong Uisuk School. When I asked him about the underwear, he said with a

smile that he had given it to his friend who was in need. He spared nothing for the good of his friends. Then I thought to myself that he would become a great champion of the independence movement.”

So I was going to meet the very man, formerly the student at the Hwasong Uisuk School, Kim Song Ju, and now President Kim Il Sung. But until the day before I had never expected that my hope to see him would be fulfilled so soon, for he was busy directing state affairs.

True, I was glad but, on the other hand, I had mixed feelings. The past 30 years of my life since August 15 liberation which I had spent holding various high offices in south Korea, weighed heavily on my mind.

The country was divided and social systems and power structures had been established in the south and the north that were antagonistic to each other. In this situation my activities in south Korea under the anti-communist regime had been directed constantly against north Korea. When thinking of myself, I could not but reflect that irrespective of my actual intentions, I had played a part, effectively, in obstructing national reunification.

Becoming aware of the harm done by this evil only in my old age, I had broken with the ruling circles in south Korea and turned out with a desire to do my bit in the overseas compatriots movement for democracy and reunification, and I had made a firm decision to visit north Korea. However, despite having heard from President Choe Hong Hui of President Kim Il Sung’s magnanimity, because of my past career all my senses became strained as the hour of the interview drew nearer.

But, surprisingly enough, President Kim Il Sung was waiting for me in the yard in front of the porch.

As had been impressed upon me through north Korean newspapers and the TV screen, he was an imposing and awe-inspiring man. He had a broad smile on his face, which gave the impression that he encouraged friendly advances.

Getting out of the car, I hurried to greet him, but he came up to me, shook my hands with both his and embraced me warmly. I felt a warm feeling inside which reminded me of meeting one’s family after a long separation.

Entering the reception room, the President urged me to sit beside him. Firstly he inquired kindly about my health and asked my age, which was on the wrong side of sixty. I spoke only a few words, hurrying over my replies and expressed my pleasure at being received by the President.

He said with deep emotion that by meeting me he was reminded of Choe Ui San who had been his teacher at the Hwasong Uisuk School. Ui San was another name of my father, Choe Dong O.

Looking across the wide lake through the window, he paused for a while, apparently recalling the days of over 50 years before.

I was surprised and happy to know that just as our family remembered the President, so he did not forget us.

He began to speak again. He said that as I knew well, he had often visited our home and found himself under an obligation to us, and then he recollected:

“Because in those days everyone was poor, at your home I would be served with boiled millet and radish leaf soup, but I ate it heartily.” He laughed gaily at times, and he was so warmhearted, so simple and modest that my frozen heart had thawed like spring snow before I was aware of it.

The President expressed his condolences by saying that although great care had been taken of Choe Ui San and despite his good health, he had died of a heart attack unexpectedly in September 1963, and then asked whether my mother was still alive in Seoul.

The President talked mainly about my father. After recalling my father’s generous personality and the great affection he had shown him, he dwelt on the life of my father after he had come over to north Korea at the time of the June 25 war.

According to the President, my father had worked hard for the reunification of the country and offered him many helpful suggestions, but to his regret he had passed away without witnessing the day of reunification.

Kim Song Ju—Kim Il Sung

While listening to President Kim Il Sung, I came to feel again that his family and mine were bound together by an unsevered line

of destiny.

Both my father and the President's father Kim Hyong Jik had been patriots who had fought for independence in Manchuria following the March First Movement, and had been comrades-in-arms.

Later President Kim Il Sung had advanced into east Manchuria to wage a guerrilla war against the Japanese imperialists and my father had moved to China proper. So the distance between President Kim Il Sung and my family had widened, but contact had been renewed after liberation when my father visited Pyongyang and met him again.

Two years later my father had again come over to north Korea and lived for 14 years under the protection of President Kim Il Sung, until he died there.

Let me say that my family and my father in particular, had witnessed how a great man had grown from young Kim Song Ju who had started out in the anti-Japanese movement with great ambitions and become General Kim Il Sung, hero of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war, and then President Kim Il Sung of today, and, at the same time, could stand testimony to the history of his political activities.

Because the tide of history had bound President Kim Il Sung and my family together, I learnt a great deal about his political activities.

Whilst I was at the Wenguang Middle School in Jilin I heard that as early as his days at the Yuwen Middle School President Kim Il Sung had earned the high regard of young Koreans and that under his leadership many circles had been organized and run at the Wenguang Middle School and at all the other schools in Jilin.

When young Kim Song Ju had conducted full-scale anti-Japanese activities, not only the young people but also a lot of those in the nationalist camp had respected and praised him highly. Minister Song Jong Do, a famous champion of the nationalist movement in the Jilin area in those days, had strongly supported and helped General Kim Il Sung, and Ryang Se Bong, commander of the Korean Independence Army active in south Manchuria, had fought together with the units led by General Kim Il Sung before he was murdered

by the Japanese imperialists.

My father had told me of an episode in the period between the late '20s and early '30s when General Kim Il Sung was preparing for the anti-Japanese guerrilla war.

Hyon Muk Gwan, a champion of the independence movement active in the "Kukmin-bu" in Manchuria, was greatly embarrassed because a host of young men in the independence army under his command respected and followed General Kim Il Sung.

Once a company commander went over to the side of General Kim Il Sung and took his company with him.

Hyon Muk Gwan later came to Nanjing in China and told my father of what had happened, saying in admiring tones that because of this he had been hostile to young Kim Song Ju, but still he regarded him as a distinguished figure.

Because I had moved to China proper and served in the army of the nationalist government after General Kim Il Sung had organized an army for the anti-Japanese guerrilla war, I had had no opportunity to hear the details of his military operations, but I would often hear through various channels the news that General Kim Il Sung had got the one-million-strong Kwantung Army of Japan under his thumb by applying a great variety of tactics.

Once I had met an official of the Shanghai Provisional Government in Chongqing who, showing me a copy of the newspaper *Tonga Ilbo* which he had, told me in excitement about the Battle of Pochonbo fought by General Kim Il Sung's units. According to him, General Kim Il Sung's units had advanced into the homeland across the Amnok River in the summer of 1937 and raided Pochon Sub-County, Hyesan County, South Hamgyong Province, and in this action had annihilated the Japanese aggressors. Then they had attacked the large Japanese forces and police which had followed them by using a decoy and had scored another great victory.

This really had been glad tidings.

If my memory serves me well, around that time, when the Chinese nationalist government was suffering defeat after defeat as the Japanese troops moved further into China proper, bringing the country under their control, many of the young Koreans who had

flocked to Chongqing began to waver and quite a few of them left for Manchuria after being informed of the great reputation of General Kim Il Sung.

Later as an officer in the army of the Chinese nationalist government I had been active in far-off south China. So I had been unable to keep in contact with other Koreans and had been unable to gain firsthand information about the anti-Japanese guerrilla war being led by General Kim Il Sung, but my Chinese colleagues told me about him.

Whilst telling me about the actions fought by General Kim Il Sung's units against the Japanese imperialists in Manchuria, they said that Commander. Kim Il Sung was a truly admirable man.

Whenever I heard such words, I would feel great national pride, although I wore a Chinese military uniform.

Even when I had returned to Seoul after August 15 liberation, I had been one of only a few people who were favoured with the privilege of being in the position of gaining a better understanding of President Kim Il Sung than others.

As I have mentioned before, I had heard from my mother that the General Kim Il Sung of today was an erstwhile student at Hwasong Uisuk School and had been given more detailed news by my father when he returned from the Joint Conference of Representatives of Political Parties and Public Organizations in North and South Korea held in April 1948 in Pyongyang.

It is still vivid in my memory that upon his return home from Pyongyang my father told my family that he had witnessed the makings of an outstanding and great man in young Kim Song Ju in his days at the Hwasong Uisuk School.

At that time, however, I paid no attention to what he said, nor did I think twice about it.

That was because due to my political stance, I had been deeply involved in the politics of south Korea and it mattered nothing to me and in fact could have caused trouble for me.

But now, dozens of years later, I was sitting face to face with President Kim Il Sung and listening to him at last.

It seemed to me that the line of destiny connecting President Kim

Il Sung and my family had, after all, brought me back to my original line from which I had once departed.

So, driven by a strong desire to study deeply the history of President Kim Il Sung's anti-Japanese struggle, I read the relevant books and visited the Korean Revolution Museum in Pyongyang and the battle sites of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war around Mt. Paekdu.

The feature film *Star of Korea* which was produced recently and released was based on President Kim Il Sung's activities in the period of preparing for the anti-Japanese guerrilla war, and by seeing it I was able to reaffirm my knowledge of his activities.

In the course of this I came to reappraise and understand more deeply President Kim Il Sung as he had really been in the days of the anti-Japanese struggle, and I would like to tell the reader of this now.

President Kim Il Sung, that is young Kim Song Ju, attended the Hwasong Uisuk School but left it in mid-course to go to Jilin and enrol at the Yuwen Middle School (as I mentioned in chapter one, when I was studying in Jilin I knew this school). He left the Hwasong Uisuk School without completing the full course because he was displeased with its outdated educational policy and inclined towards more progressive ideas.

The fact that as a youth of only 15, to be more accurate, as a boy, he had the resolution to leave school early, taking exception to its educational policy, is enough to give you some clear idea of his inner mind, his extraordinary spiritual power which was in the process of growth and his indestructible conviction.

Not long after young Kim Song Ju had moved to Jilin, many young people, including those who had joined the Down-with-Imperialism Union (commonly abbreviated to DIU), a banned organization which he had formed with his comrades at the Hwasong Uisuk School, had followed him to Jilin and began to rally around him.

Before long he had shaken the whole Jilin area. He directed a variety of anti-Japanese movements including the mass struggle against the Japanese Jilin-Hoeryong railway project which soon spread throughout the whole of China, and thus became a

conspicuous figure in the anti-Japanese movement of Koreans in Manchuria.

In this way he leapt to fame as a recognized leader of students.

He was elected chairman of the Ryugil Association of Korean Students, which was a unique federation of the Korean students in Jilin and commanded the admiration, confidence and respect of the Korean youth in Manchuria.

Young Kim Song Ju held up a new banner of independence and a people-centred idea which was quite different from that of the former nationalist and communist movements. The group of young people formed around him wished to rename him to express their respect for and expectation of their leader who had emerged like a morning star.

At first they unanimously called him Il Sung, or Han Byol meaning one star which emerged as the bright lodestar of Korea. A short time afterwards his name was changed of Il Sung meaning “be the sun.” They wished that their outstanding leader be the sun of the nation rather than the morning star.

So, he has been called Kim Il Sung ever since.

I think that Song Ju, the President’s original name, has a profound meaning, too. Kim Hyong Jik, the leader of the national liberation movement, must have named his son Song Ju to express his hope that he become the pillar of the country.

As soon as he embarked on the revolutionary struggle in his teens, President Kim Il Sung was looked up to by his comrades and the people as the “pillar” to support the country as the “morning star” illuminating the road ahead for the nation to save it from darkness and, further, as the “sun” which would deliver the nation and lead it to a bright future.

The Legendary Young General

President Kim Il Sung’s subsequent activities showed that he lived up to the trust and expectations of his comrades and other people. After moving his theatre of activities from Jilin to north Jiandao he founded the anti-Japanese guerrilla army on April 25, 1932 in the forest of Antu. At the time he was a youth of twenty

years.

This stirring news of the foundation of the guerrilla army soon spread over east China and reached the ears of his fellow countrymen in the homeland across the Amnok and Tuman Rivers. To the popular masses it was happy news which inspired hope and courage, but to the Japanese imperialists it was a great shock and a source of terror.

The revolutionary army led by General Kim Il Sung fought bravely, displaying its might in the vast expanse of the Manchurian wilderness for 15 long years, and sometimes crossed the northern borders of the homeland to the consternation of the Japanese imperialist rulers.

I visited the Pochonbo Battle site, the most famous of the advance operations into the homeland led by General Kim Il Sung. There I saw the Pochonbo police substation riddled with bullet-holes which was raided by the revolutionary army, as well as other traces of the battle.

On display at the Pochonbo Revolutionary Museum I found the reports of this battle in the newspapers *Choson Ilbo* and *Tonga Ilbo* under the titles: "A large communist force raided across the border and set fire to the police substation and government and public offices," "600 troops led by Kim Il Sung are expected to cross the border on a raid; the police forces of North and South Hamgyong Provinces have been alerted," "The main force led by Kim Il Sung clashes with punitive troops in the forest of Mt. Paekdu."

Young General Kim Il Sung was a gifted military strategist. His troops fought where and when they wanted to, always seizing the initiative.

They fought courageously and skilfully, launching an attack or falling back in defence at the proper time.

They would attack in the west, whilst creating a diversion in the east. His troops would move off covering hundreds of *ri* at a stretch, unnoticed by the enemy forces, lie in ambush on their route and then suddenly fall on and crush them before they realized what was happening and sometimes he would get small units to lure the enemy out into the open and the guerrillas lying in ambush would attack the enemy forces from all directions and crush them in an

instant.

Sometimes his troops would pretend to move far away and then turn back to slip in right under the nose of the enemy forces and deal them a fatal blow, taking advantage of the fact that they were exhausted after the pursuit. When the enemy was concentrated in areas of dense forest looking for our troops, they would be moving unnoticed on the plains where they would march in broad daylight in fine array along the military road built by the enemy.

The Kapsan-Musan military road which I passed along during my four of battle sites was such a road. Driving along the military road I had a vivid picture of General Kim Il Sung's guerrillas marching along it.

When the enemy troops moved to the plains in pursuit of our troops, these would move to densely wooded areas and throw the pursuing enemy off the scent in this favourable terrain, swiftly covering their traces.

As this demonstrates, the General was a talented strategist. But if we view General Kim Il Sung in the period of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war only from a military angle, I think, it would be one-sided. In this period General Kim Il Sung displayed to the full his outstanding qualities and abilities as a political leader who would shape the destiny of the nation.

He was, above all, the thinker-politician who evolved a unique philosophy in those days and guided the anti-Japanese national liberation movement according to this idea. This is the Juche idea, well-known today at home and abroad. When the General embarked on the anti-Japanese struggle, he is said to have conceived the Juche idea, recognizing the shortcomings in the former communist and nationalist movements whose leaders intended to achieve independence with the assistance of foreign countries without relying on the strength of the nation and engrossed themselves only in factional strife, detached from the masses. It was easy for me to recognize the Juche idea as an idea of national independence. Ours may be viewed as roughly the time when large and small nations are in confrontation with each other. So, that which will save the nation and shape its destiny must be the nation itself. The secret of the victory of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army led by General Kim Il Sung over the one-million-

strong Japanese army lies in its spirit of national identity, I believe.

General Kim Il Sung displayed his exceptional executive ability by rallying the masses and awakening them to the anti-Japanese independence movement. Ever since embarking on the anti-Japanese struggle, General Kim Il Sung consistently maintained that in order to drive out the Japanese imperialists and achieve national independence, the whole nation must be united, and for this purpose, not only workers and peasants but all the anti-Japanese forces including intellectuals, religious men and capitalists must be rallied. Putting this idea into practice, General Kim Il Sung founded the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, an anti-Japanese underground organization, in 1936. As soon as the ARF had been formed he dispatched political workers to northern Korea and to Seoul, not to mention Manchuria, to expand the organization. On several occasions I read records of the activities in the ARF of Chondoists including Pak In Jin, Chairman of the Council of Chondoists in Hamgyong Province. It was a surprise to me and yet gave me great pleasure.

It made me realize once more the might of the anti-Japanese movement directed by General Kim Il Sung, to think that such a powerful anti-Japanese underground organization was active in the homeland even in those dangerous days.

General Kim Il Sung was also an outstanding practical thinker who put a new political idea into practice in the days of the anti-Japanese struggle.

I saw the material about the guerrilla base which was established in the deep forest of Jiandao. It was very interesting. The guerrilla base was really a supply base for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, and here there was no Japanese system of rule, but a government of the Korean people established to administer the political life of the Korean people. It was, so to speak, a “national republic.” It was really marvellous that in the 1930s this guerrilla base had been set up and maintained for a long time within the encirclement of the Japanese troops and under the very nose of the Japanese.

I read several newspaper reports from those days concerning the fact that on hearing about the guerrilla base, the paradise where Koreans could get together and live in harmony, our fellow countrymen moved to it one after another from the areas along the

Tuman River.

I believe that it was due to this political experience in the guerrilla bases in the thirties that General Kim Il Sung was able to administer the affairs of state in a unique way under the political programme of national independence immediately upon his triumphant return to Pyongyang after liberation.

In a nutshell, during the period of the anti-Japanese struggle General Kim Il Sung was a great strategist, great thinker and great statesman and was the hope of the nation. So in those days there was no one who did not know about him in the homeland and there were naturally many legends surrounding him.

I remember one story that was circulating amongst people when I returned to Seoul after liberation.

Some years before the defeat of Japanese imperialism a handsome young man had been in Severance Hospital in Seoul. After he had left the hospital a card bearing the name "Kim Il Sung" was found in his bed. Informed of this, the Japanese police set off in hasty pursuit, but failed to find him. They said he had crossed the border by using the art of shrinking the earth.

It was really a legend, but in retrospect it was a reflection of his greatness in the eyes of the public and an expression of the simple beliefs of the people.

Anyhow General Kim Il Sung was a charismatic personality, but he was so young. He was just a youth of 33 when he returned to Pyongyang in triumph, at the head of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, the only one which had fought and beaten the Japanese imperialists from all the anti-Japanese armed forces that had once sprung up like mushrooms after the rain in north-east China.

The people in the homeland who had never met General Kim Il Sung and knew little of his life so far, naturally admired him because he, the tiger of Mt. Paekdu, who had struck terror into the hearts of the Japanese soldiers, was so young.

Although I am not sure whether it was derived from the prevailing atmosphere in those days or not, another false rumour was circulating in south Korea after liberation that General Kim Il Sung who had returned to north Korea and General Kim Il Sung who had waged the anti-Japanese guerrilla war were different

people of the same name and that General Kim Il Sung who had fought in Manchuria was advanced in age. This was a complete fabrication.

At the time in Seoul I had data sufficient to show that this was propaganda designed to harm north Korea, but I could not reveal it. In this book I am doing for the first time what I failed to do then. By way of proof I would like to give here the views of Kim Hyong Uk, former director of the south Korean CIA.

In his manuscript *Power and Conspiracy* he wrote: A rumour that two different people of the name of General Kim Il Sung existed began to spread from the time when Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party was in power and it became rife under the Pak Jung Hi regime. But it was utterly false. Why then did they start such a rumour? It came about as a result of the rebellious spirit of Pak Jung Hi who had once been an officer of the Japanese army which fought against the anti-Japanese guerrilla army led by General Kim Il Sung, and so he felt a sense of envy.

In shedding light on this fact, Kim Hyong Uk confessed that, although he already had inside knowledge of this in Seoul at the time, he had neither the courage nor the need to disclose it, particularly as it would be at the risk of his life.

The Personality of President Kim Il Sung Today

I had an interview with President Kim Il Sung, the former young General. I clearly perceived in him the mettle of the ever-victorious hero, the brilliant commander who had won great renown in the sacred anti-Japanese national war of salvation. I am a soldier, too. I am now nothing more than a useless, retired general. I am an old soldier who had spent all his youth on the battlefield. In truth, only a soldier can know a soldier well. Although I was meeting him for the first time, I could clearly perceive in him the characteristics of the brilliant commander of the anti-Japanese war, although he was then far advanced in years. No matter how many years have passed, the character of the General who fought so many battles will never disappear, I thought.

As the saying goes, "The older, the stronger," so his looks were brimming over with health and vigour and his eyes were glittering

with an iron will and these characteristics could be found only in a general who had been tempered in armed service for a long time.

Reflecting on the past, the President spoke a few words to me. He recollected the campaign to boycott Japanese goods he had organized by uniting the students when he was studying in Jilin and the difficult days when he had dispatched political workers through a forest of enemy bayonets to form the ARF organizations in Seoul while he was fighting the guerrilla war. When he spoke, he had a serious look on his face. While talking with the President, I was strongly impressed by his genial and benevolent personality as well as by his soldierly bearing. His words and gestures held the warmth of spring, tenderness to soothe the pains of everybody and magnanimity which expressed his desire to join hands with anyone who cared for the nation and country.

I was reflecting on what might have given rise to this tenderness and magnanimity when the President turned the conversation to the question of the present and future of our divided nation.

He expressed his approval of my resolve to break with the past and work for the reunification of the country. He gave me encouragement, pointing to the need for me to play my part for the reunification of the country by letting bygones be bygones at that crucial moment when the nation was standing at a crossroads which led either to permanent division or to reunification. Stressing that everyone should place national interests before anything else concerning reunification, he said:

“Although we have communist beliefs, we place national interests before anything else. I have always made this a firm rule ever since launching the revolutionary movement.”

Whether communism or nationalism is a matter of primary concern today, but we place communism second and national reunification first, the President stressed once again.

I was particularly moved by what he said next:

“As in the days when I was waging the armed struggle against the Japanese, so today I always think of the nation. What is the use of building communism without our nation?”

Yes, that's it, I thought. Communism for the nation, revolution for the nation, the anti-Japanese guerrilla war for the nation! I

came to understand that beneath President Kim Il Sung's genial, magnanimous and noble personality lay a determined mind with which he valued national interests above all other things and subordinated everything to them.

I believe that it is because of his love for the nation and the great value he places on national interests, that President Kim Il Sung is as cool as an autumn frost towards those who infringe upon the interests of the nation and yet offers the warmth of a spring sun to fellow countrymen and everyone who loves the nation.

In fact, I found in President Kim Il Sung the genuine leader of the nation I had been seeking.

A New National Idea

I think that "Juche" or "Juche idea" is widely known in the world. Even those who are hostile to north Korea, to say nothing of those sympathetic to its social system, are bound to come across this word when they turn their eyes on the different aspects of this country.

The Juche idea was evolved by President Kim Il Sung. In north Korean politics, the building of the economy and culture and social life are guided according to the Juche idea. In order to understand north Korean society one should understand the Juche idea. If one is to perceive clearly the true state of affairs in north Korea, one should know something about the Juche idea. In other words, without understanding the Juche idea one will never fully realize that north Korea could carve an original way for building a paradise where national sovereignty and the personality of the President who has guided it are safeguarded.

Thinking in this way I took an interest in the President's Juche idea and tried to form my own views on it during my visit to north Korea.

A Record of an American's Journey in North Korea

I became interested in the Juche idea before my visit to north Korea. I remember that this interest began a short time after I left Seoul to seek refuge in the United States. I happened to hear a

rumour leaked from American political circles, which ran as follows:

In the autumn of 1973 the then President of Algeria, Boumediene, visited the United States to attend a session of the UN General Assembly and, on that occasion, he met a high-ranking US statesman. During their conversation, the question of the reunification of our country arose. Apparently, the American said that the Seoul government had no philosophy while Pyongyang's leader did have. Clearly, by that he was referring to President Kim Il Sung's Juche idea. It was surprising to hear this from a statesman of the United States, a country that was extremely antagonistic to Pyongyang. This meant that he recognized the truth of a political philosophy which advocates national independence.

I was somewhat shocked on hearing this. Later I decided to visit north Korea, and collected material concerning north Korea. In the course of studying it I came to be increasingly interested in the Juche idea.

Around that time I read a report of the AFSC delegation's visit to north Korea.

The AFSC is an American social research institute of Quakers. It sent a delegation to north Korea in September 1980, a year before my visit.

After returning home from its 10-day tour of north Korea the delegation published a report on its visit, which gave a fairly objective appraisal of the situation. The references in the report to the political philosophy of north Korea attracted my particular attention.

Let me quote some passages from it: "Juche, the north Korean philosophy which is recognized as Chajusong, is often misunderstood as simply a flowery word in Western countries, but this idea, in effect, pervades the whole society and can be said to be a matter of great concern for many developing countries."

"North Korea has a more independent economy than most other countries. As is clearly shown by their belief that man is the master of everything, the north Korean people are optimistic about the future and full of confidence."

This remark by Americans boils down to this: the Juche idea,

unlike the strained interpretation of it in the western world, is the idea which stresses the Chajusong of the nation. In putting the Juche idea into practice, north Korea, sandwiched between major powers, maintains its political and economic independence. And this has become a focus of attention for the third world.

While reading the report, I thought again of the fact that study groups of President Kim Il Sung's Juche idea are active all over the world, and felt my heart swell. I imagine this was something of a national instinct.

It was really wonderful, that an idea which illuminates the road of genuine national independence although evolved in a weak country was attracting the attention of every nation of the world. Moreover, when I thought that the idea had been conceived in our nation, albeit the other half under a different social system, I was beside myself with joy and pride.

What is the Juche idea that it draws so much attention from the people of the underdeveloped countries? What is the appeal of the Juche idea? Does it hold the truth that illuminates the road of revival for weak nations that have been invaded and oppressed by major powers and subjected to humiliation, suffering sorrow? This is what I began to ask myself.

This is more or less how I became interested in the Juche idea.

The Meaning of Juche

During my stay in north Korea I read some books on the Juche idea and heard explanations given by scholars.

Not being a social scientist, I cannot claim that the studying I have done means that I have come to understand the Juche idea.

Nevertheless, I tried to form my own opinions on the Juche idea, based on what I had read and heard from these scholars.

First of all, I was told that the Juche idea is an idea based on a philosophy that places man at the centre of everything, a philosophy that gives the main stress to man. In other words, the Juche idea, they said, is based on the philosophical world outlook that man is the master and shaper of his own destiny and transforms the world. The scholars asserted that materialistic

Marxism came into being in opposition to the previous idealism and that the characteristic feature of the Juche idea is that while admitting materialism, it overcomes its limitations by which the world was viewed with the highest priority given to matter, and puts forward a new man-centred idea.

O, if that's so, the Juche idea must be called anthropocentrism, I thought to myself. I believe that neither material nor spirit can be negated in the world. So, I think that if materialism gives absolute stress to material, and idealism to the spirit, the Juche idea is an idea which reaches a higher plane and is therefore anthropocentrism.

If one proceeds from this anthropocentrism, one will conclude that everything in the world should serve to make man, the master of the world, happy and to create a happy life for every person. This is my basic understanding of the Juche idea.

Next I learnt that the Juche idea is an idea of national independence. According to north Korean scholars, the Juche idea maintains that as the master of the world is man and his destiny is dependent on himself alone, so the destiny of the nation depends on the nation itself and all nations are entitled to lead their life as they want and are responsible for doing so.

I found it easy to understand this point. It is a self-evident truth that since the nation is the biggest social community of people and human society comprises large and small nations, in order for the people to lead a free life, the nation should be free, and only when the nation is rich and strong can people lead a happy life.

Nevertheless, the inequality still exists in the world whereby the strong nations conquer and dominate the weak ones. This is an encroachment on national sovereignty. I have always tried to think of ways to ensure equality for all large and small nations and eternal peace in the world. So I could readily agree with the Juche idea that values national sovereignty so highly.

While my interest in the Juche idea was being formed, I was received by President Kim Il Sung, and this provided me with a good opportunity to improve my understanding of the Juche idea.

Can there be a better way to understand the Juche idea than to talk to its author?

At the interview with the President we discussed mainly practical matters and he laid much stress on the question of national sovereignty.

Here is a summary of his remarks.

The common theme of all his remarks was that national sovereignty is the lifeblood of the nation and its inalienable right and that the nation without Chajusong is, in effect, nothing more than a dead body. The dignity and honour of a nation is inconceivable without Chajusong. It is nothing but a daydream to think of building a rich and powerful nation unless Chajusong is exercised.

Hence it is important, he stressed, not to become sycophantic because if we fall into this trap and dance to the tune of others as happened in the days of the Li dynasty, the country and the nation will go to ruin.

He said that north Korea had followed its own course in building a democratic state immediately after liberation and had built its own style of socialism in the process of socialist construction.

He went on to say that our nation should never dance to the tune of others nor desire to live in bondage to other countries and that we should never fall under the domination of America or Japan.

Referring to the question of national reunification, the President added that what he wanted to emphasize in particular was that, whatever the circumstances, reunification should be achieved independently by the efforts of the Korean nation.

I fully agreed with his views which were permeated with the idea of national independence. When I told him that north Korea had been turned into a paradise on earth through the materialization of the Juche idea, the idea of national independence, the President said with a smile: "Does this mean 'Innaechon' (patience will take one to heaven) preached by Chondoism?" I took this remark to mean that the Juche idea had something in common with the Chondoist creed.

Chondoism and the Juche Idea

During my stay in north Korea I had the opportunity to meet the

Chondoists there, whom I had been unable to contact for a long time.

Availing myself of this opportunity I got to know the true state of affairs of Chondoism and the social status of its believers in north Korea.

I tried to see how they managed to live in harmony with the situation in north Korea and what they thought of this situation.

As could have been supposed, the influence of Chondoism was not so great and its believers were seemingly few.

However, I got the impression that the believers led a devout religious life. The north Korean authorities seemed to be favourably disposed towards them.

There is a low hill called Changgwang in the centre of Pyongyang.

At the foot of this hill I found a cozy multi-storey building which was occupied by the central headquarters of the Chondoist Chongu Party.

I entered the building. The first sight that met my eyes was a portrait of Master Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism.

I had a memorable meeting with Chairman Chong Sin Hyok and other officials of the Central Committee of the Chondoist Chongu Party.

We told each other of the activities of Chondoists in north and south Korea and talked openly about matters of mutual interest as well as the question of national reunification.

I gave Chairman Chong Sin Hyok the scriptures of Chondoism issued by the general headquarters of Chondoism in Seoul as a souvenir of our meeting.

One Sunday I called on a Chondoist living in west Pyongyang.

A thousand emotions crowded my mind when I, along with my colleagues in north Korea, sang together the *Song of Peace of Mind* and the *Song of Heroism*, and read a sermon about national security and public peace.

I believed in my mind that I was beginning to restore the ties of kindred between believers in the north and south which had been severed after liberation. In the course of talking with north Korean

devotees my attention was riveted on the fact that they agreed with the Juche idea and that they were taking an active part in the building of socialism convinced that it was only when they joined hands with communists that they could build a paradise on earth of national security and public peace and lead a happy life.

While listening to the views and experiences of my north Korean colleagues, I became more fully convinced that there were many common points between the creed of Chondoism and the Juche idea.

Let me refer to several points which led me to think that the two are drawn together by a common thread.

I think that, in the first place, the doctrine of Chondoism and the Juche idea have a basic principle in common, from which they both originate. As I have mentioned before, the Juche idea is based on the philosophical view that man is the master of everything and decides everything. In other words, it is anthropocentric.

This theory corresponds with the idea of “Innaechon.”

“Innaechon” means that because the highest heaven is found only in the mind of man, man is the most advanced being.

Viewed in this light, Chondoism, too, is a man-centred doctrine.

Proceeding from this viewpoint, that is, the viewpoint of attaching primary importance to man, the Juche idea gives the highest priority to advocating and defending the interests of the working masses. I think this is also another area that is consistent with Chondoism.

Generally, people comprise different social strata. For example, there are people who monopolize wealth and power and live while keeping others under their thumb, and there are those who lead a miserable life oppressed by the rich and those in authority.

In general, the former is in the minority in society while the latter is numerous. It is a stark reality that has remained unchanged throughout history that the gap between the two is growing increasingly wider, so in effect “The rich get richer and the poor, poorer.”

According to north Korean scholars, the Juche idea is a philosophy for the majority to put an end to this social injustice and

provide them with a free life.

In this respect the same is true of Chondoism.

Choe Je U founded Tonghak and called it the doctrine of the poor.

He left behind a priceless saying that Chondoism aims to “do good in the country to relieve the suffering of all the people.”

There is no doubt that this assertion went against the grain with the tyrannical feudal rulers and the Japanese.

However, despite the cruel punishment and persecution of Choe Je U and Choe Si Haeng, the founders of Chondoism, the doctrine could not be stamped out.

As I have mentioned before, it can be said that regarding their basic ideal, Chondoism and the Juche idea have something in common.

Next, the Juche idea considers it an important matter to transform nature and society in accordance with the desires and needs of man and for man to remould himself into a new type so that everyone is provided with a free life.

This is also similar to the spirit of Chondoism which aspires to the creation of a new heaven, a new earth and a new man.

I am told that the Juche idea puts forward independence, self-support and self-defence as the fundamental principles for the implementation of its ideal. In other words, it aims to establish the sovereignty of the nation and to build an independent national economy with which one can live without relying on others and a self-reliant defence capability that can safeguard national security against foreign aggression.

This principle is quite correct viewed in the light of history and the present situation in the world and in the case of weak nations it is a matter which affects their destiny. I have mentioned this before, so I will not go into it in detail here.

I would like only to point out that this principle has something in common with the Chondoist idea of “opposition to Westerners and Japanese” and “national security and public peace.”

I have dealt with the similarities between the doctrine of Chondoism and the Juche idea. In conclusion I would like to stress

that they were both born of the Korean nation.

As is known, when Christianity spread to our country in the 19th century, Choe Je U felt the need to found a national religion. He adopted the best points of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and formed a new doctrine of Chondoism and named it Tonghak to distinguish it from Sohak (Western Learning), that is, Christianity.

I can say with pride that because Tonghak-Chondoism reflects the spirit of the Korean nation, it served as the guiding idea of the Kabo Peasant War which adorns the modern history of our nation; and Son Byong Hui, the third head of Chondoism, was acclaimed as a leader of the Korean Independence Movement of 1919.

The Juche idea is the idea which was evolved by President Kim Il Sung, and born of the Korean nation, unlike Marxism and Leninism.

As I have said before, the Juche idea was implemented in the northern half of the country and has borne fine fruit in the form of national prosperity.

I think Chondoism and the Juche idea share common ground in that they embody the spirit and hope of the Korean nation. So, I, as a Chondoist, can easily understand and agree with the Juche idea.

The World Spotlight

I have said that the Juche idea has something in common with the doctrine of Chondoism and that I could understand it with ease. But, later it occurred to me that if its fundamental characteristic is to advocate a free life for man and to realize and defend national independence, who can raise any objection to it?

In north Korea I confirmed that people of different political views and religious beliefs adhered to the Juche idea.

During my inspection of Kim Il Sung University I talked to Professor Chi Chang Ik, its chancellor. When he told me that he had been in charge of putting on record the proceedings at the Joint Conference of Representatives of Political Parties and Public Organizations in North and South Korea in 1948, I asked him some questions about how matters had stood at that time.

This is what he told me.

Kim Gu visited Pyongyang and expressed his admiration for General Kim Il Sung's policy of national independence; he witnessed that, with the comprehensive Juche principle as a basis, the General approached all his problems, both large and small, in the interests of the nation, rejecting foreign intervention and that the people had rebuilt the factories destroyed by the Japanese imperialists in their flight on their own and were acting as masters to increase the strength of the nation and said that this was his true country.

He was so moved that he pledged to the General that he would support his politics and presented him with the seal of the Shanghai Provisional Government which he always carried with him even under the reverses of national disaster.

Needless to say, General Kim Il Sung did not accept his offer. In this way, I thought, Kim Gu displayed his sympathy for the Juche idea, the idea of national independence and self-reliance, which had been put into reality in north Korea.

I was told that the same was the case with Kim Gyu Sik. At the north-south joint conference Kim Gyu Sik admired the independent policy of north Korea and the successes achieved through the efforts of the north Korean people and said that he would get the "Federation of National Independence" (a political organization in Seoul led by him) to follow General Kim Il Sung's policy of national independence, adding that the best way was to dance not to the tune of others, but to our own.

This demonstrates that Kim Gyu Sik also agreed with the Juche idea.

Kim Gu and Kim Gyu Sik were the leading figures in the nationalist movement in our country and the pioneers who devoted their whole life for the good of the nation.

The fact that they were moved so much by the reality of north Korea, still in the first stages of government and the building of its economy and culture guided by the Juche idea, convinced me that the Juche idea is not incompatible with nationalism and does share something in common with it.

I do not know what Christians think of the Juche idea, but I heard that some Korean priests in America who had been to north Korea spoke well of it.

With my superficial knowledge, I think that if it is true that Christianity set up the ideal of the “salvation of man” and was born of Christ’s activities to rescue the unfortunate poor people of Jerusalem, then the basic ideal of Christianity has something to do with the Juche idea.

The Juche idea, which stresses the Chajusong of the nation proceeding from a man-centred idea and seeks to bring about the peace and prosperity of mankind by establishing equality between large and small nations, is really an attractive idea.

It can be said that the Juche idea includes a universal principle which provides answers to the questions of the destiny of individuals and those of the future of each nation and the whole of mankind.

For this reason the people of the world with different political views and religious beliefs are interested in the Juche idea, I think.

This occurred to me, in particular, when I inspected the Tower of Juche Idea standing on the banks of the Taedong River.

There is an alcove at lowest part of the tower, the wall of which is covered with slabs of stone of different colours which bear inscriptions.

A closer scrutiny revealed that they were written in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and other languages unfamiliar to me.

According to the guide accompanying me, the slabs of stone covering the wall had been sent by individuals and organizations of different countries the world over and what was written on them was the names of their contributors.

I discovered they were marble of exquisite colours and curious slabs of stone unfamiliar to me.

It was evident that the most valuable stone found in each country had been sent.

Inscribed on them were the names of study groups of the Juche idea in various countries of the world, scholars, entrepreneurs, great figures in politics and Presidents of several African countries.

I was told that they had been sent from the five continents of the world, at the news of the construction of the Tower of Juche Idea in Pyongyang.

Although they must have been adherents of or sympathizers with the Juche idea, still it was a manifestation of the sincerity of all of them.

Upon leaving the alcove, I looked up at the Tower of Juche Idea soaring into the sky, topped with a blazing torch (in the evening electricity makes it blaze like a torch) and thought that this tower was sustained by the hearts of the people of the world.

During my stay in north Korea, the television and newspapers reported almost every day the arrival in Pyongyang of political figures and scholars from South-East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America who had come to study the Juche idea.

Of these visitors, not a few were from Europe and Japan, but most of them were from the developing countries of the third world.

Pyongyang has become the city that attracts the attention of the world, the world spotlight.

It is my invariable opinion that the greatness of a nation is derived from its national spirit.

The nation that has an intelligible philosophy of its own is a great nation.

On the other hand, there is no historical evidence that a nation without a philosophy has made steady progress. In the past our people could not escape the bitter fate of becoming a homeless race to be humiliated and maltreated by others under the nickname “Yopjon” because they had no clear national philosophy.

But today our nation has become the nation that has its own philosophy which cuts a path ahead for it, the Juche idea illuminating the road ahead not only for our nation but also for the small and weak nations of the world. This is really our nation's pride.

Through the implementation of the Juche idea our nation has become what it should be, even in just half of the country, and turn into a great nation leading the world along the path of Chajusong. Inwardly I paid my respects to President Kim Il Sung who created the excellent Juche idea, looking up to him as a thinker, the like of which is rarely seen in the world.

Benevolent Administration

People Moved to Tears

During my visits to north Korea I received the strong impression that the people had complete faith in and respect for President Kim Il Sung.

Wherever I went I heard people speaking highly of the President, expressing nothing but thanks.

On the television and in the press and through the songs I saw and heard the blissful looks and voices of the people, male and female and young and old, saying "As you can see, we are leading a fine life thanks to the leader."

The reverence for the President felt by north Koreans often finds expression in tears.

In newsreels and documentary films about north Korea, I saw many scenes of people shedding tears as they welcomed the President on a tour of on-the-spot guidance to the provinces.

On several occasions I attended functions and mass meetings held in the presence of President Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang and there I saw people who, their eyes glistening with tears, were enthusiastically cheering the President, waving their hands and stamping their feet. It was a unique sight.

Although I had travelled in many countries, I had never seen people express their feelings of respect for their leader by crying.

More often than not, Westerners are nonplussed to see the north Koreans expressing their feelings for their leader in this way.

In its record of its tour of north Korea the delegation of the AFSC wrote that the north Koreans' feelings for President Kim Il Sung seemed, in general, to be of a religious colouring. The delegates suggested, in so many words, that this was undesirable.

However, they had seen this in a bad light at first and became convinced of it to some extent once they had become acquainted with the particular situation in north Korea.

The record of their journey says, in addition:

"To serve the people throughout his life, show affection for the

children and deal with everyone equally-all this is associated with the name of President Kim Il Sung and so impressed us very much.”

Let me cite passages from a travel diary of north Korea written by a West German lady author, Luise Ringer.

One day she learned that Chang, who looked after her during her tour of north Korea, had attended church when he was a boy and asked him:

“Do you still go to church?”

“No,” replied Chang.

Frau Ringer asked him why he had stopped going to church.

“The great leader has liberated our country and now provides us with everything we need. Why should I go to church?” he said.

Frau Ringer nodded, thinking that for the people of this country, President Kim Il Sung meant Saviour. She was well aware of the President’s leadership ability and meritorious service.

It is quite natural that I, a Korean, should have understood easily and appreciated the remarkable depth of the feeling of respect felt by north Koreans for President Kim Il Sung, yet even Westerners have been convinced.

In acquainting myself with the true situation in north Korea, I realized that the people’s respect for him was a natural feelings which they had acquired through their experiences in life.

What were these experiences that touched their hearts so deeply?

I thought of President Kim Il Sung’s love of man, love of the masses and love of the nation with which he bends all his energies to the good and well-being of the people.

President Kim Il Sung conducts political affairs not in his office, but among the people. His political arena is the factories where machines are working and the fields of ripening crops, I was told.

In summer the President puts on a simple shirt to walk along the footpath of a paddy field with farmers, questioning and teaching them; when he visits a factory he goes first to the workers’ dormitory and also tries their food; when dropping in at a shop he will first try the soy and bean paste on sale.

It seems to be a basic characteristic of his political activities that he always goes among the people, discovering their needs and inconveniences and resolving them. I did not visit a lot of places during my stay in north Korea, but in view of my itinerary, they were not a small number.

Wherever I went, I almost always heard remarks testifying to President Kim Il Sung's constant tours of inspection, such comments as "The leader visited here on such and such day," or "This is the machine the leader saw and approved."

When I saw a newsreel of the President inspecting a chicken plant (this is what a poultry farm is called in north Korea) in the suburbs of Pyongyang on New Year's Day, I remarked that the President never seemed to rest. At this Sonu commented:

"The leader goes out to factories and the rural areas on his birthday so that no birthday meal is arranged for him.

"He says that nothing is more pleasant and makes him happier than to spend his birthday for the promotion of the people's welfare."

There are many stories about the noble personality of this President who shows such great loving care for the people.

Once I visited my birthplace at Uiju, North Pyongan Province, where I was told the following story.

One summer in the '50s soon after the ceasefire, President Kim Il Sung happened to pass a mountain village in North Pyongan Province. At that time buildings destroyed by the war had not yet been restored and the life of the population was extremely hard.

As the President's car approached, some primary school children saluted him enthusiastically in the manner of the Children's Union.

Among them was a boy who was barefoot.

It was a phase of life showing how the north Korean economy had been destroyed.

The President made the driver stop the car and got out.

Stroking the heads of the children, he said how difficult it would be for them to have to travel a long way to school and then asked the children if any of them were ill.

He looked at the barefoot boy with compassion and turning to

his entourage said: “Look! They salute me, even though we’ve failed to provide them even with shoes.”

This story stayed in my mind for a long time. It seemed a simple yet heart-warming story. The leader’s attitude towards the people and his nation moved me to tears. [OBJ]



The author in front of the International Friendship Exhibition

There is a saying that compassion moves a man to tears. I realize now why the north Korean people weep as they call President Kim Il Sung “father leader.”

In such ways does President Kim Il Sung’s noble personality manifest itself in his affection for the people, and this does not simply mean bestowing favours on them, I believe.

It occurred to me that if the personality to influence and attract people is to be called virtue, the President is endowed with the greatest virtue.

With the strength of love his virtue shows the right way for those hovering in darkness and brings pleasure to sufferers. In short, he is the saint of saints.

Putting other stories aside, I would like to relate one from my personal experience.

During my first interview with President Kim Il Sung the May 16

coup d'état came up in conversation. The President sternly denounced Pak Jung Hi's usurpation of power, then looked at me suddenly and said mildly that I had been involved at that time, but it must be considered as an inevitable consequence of the circumstances.

Needless to say, he was thinking that I had been the foreign minister of Pak Jung Hi's military junta.

A man of a distinguished personality can bring people under his influence with just a word. And to come to a mutual understanding does not need a hundred or a thousand words. I have reached the age of 70, experiencing the vicissitudes of life.

Why can I not tell truth from hypocrisy? I sensed the noble character of the President in a single word he spoke and was deeply grateful to him for the warmhearted care he showed me, a man of a checkered career.

Sense of Duty

President Kim Il Sung values all people and in particular, respects those who have fought for justice.

President Kim Il Sung shows particular care and concern for all those who have worked conscientiously for the country and nation whether they are communists, nationalists or religious men.

The following story which I read in a magazine in my room in Pyongyang is still vivid in my memory.

There was a revolutionary named Cha Gwang Su who took part in the anti-Japanese struggle having pledged to share life and death with General Kim Il Sung when the General had been active in Jilin, Manchuria.

Though he was much older than the General, he was full of life and looked up to him as his teacher and leader. He played a main part in changing the General's name from Kim Song Ju to Han Byol and then to Kim Il Sung. He died a heroic death on the battlefield some time after the anti-Japanese guerrilla army had been founded by General Kim Il Sung.

Having been told that his wife had been pregnant at the time of his death, the General tried hard to find his wife and child.

However it was all but hopeless because he was constantly on the move as he fought the guerrilla war.

Nevertheless, the thought of the bereaved family of his late comrade-in-arms was constantly on his mind.

After his return to Pyongyang following liberation, he bent every effort, to finding them by following up rumours all over the country, but in vain.

A long time passed, but suddenly the daughter was found over 40 years after Cha Gwang Su's death.

Her name was Cha Yong A. She kept a small head and shoulders photograph of her late father which her mother had given her on her deathbed. This news was passed from mouth to mouth to be conveyed to President Kim Il Sung.

Cha Yong A was immediately summoned to the President.

Upon meeting her, the President said: "Where have you been and why have you come only now? It has been difficult for me to find you, but for you to find me would have been easy, wouldn't it?"

Tears formed in his eyes.

A lengthy description here, too, is superfluous.

I think that this story alone is enough to show the personality of the President who values comradeship above everything else.

Through talking with the President I came to realize that he must have treated the nationalists who took part in the independence movement with the same sense of duty.

The President remembered Ryang Se Bong, O Dong Jin, Chang Chol Ho, Li Jang Chong (whose original name was Li Gwan Rin) and other leaders of the independence movement who had been active in Manchuria.

He recalled details about the activities of each of them, including the places and dates of their activities and the other people who had been involved.

Although I know a little about the leaders of the independence movement in those days because my father had been engaged in the independence movement in Manchuria, the President's memory was remarkable.

It had all happened a long time before, that is, 50 years earlier.

I was impressed by the President's wonderful memory and, at the same time, I thought that it proved not merely his ability to remember, but that he showed enormous concern for and attachment to those who had displayed their devotion to the country, with no regard to isms and doctrines.

And, still now, after so many years have passed, the President has not forgotten the former leaders of the independence movement and their bereaved families and takes good care of them.

During my stay in Pyongyang I called at the home of Li Jang Chong, a woman who had once taken part in the independence movement.

She lived in a detached house with a well kept garden. She was nearly 90, but looked hale and hearty. She was very glad to see me when I greeted her. "Is it you Choe Dok Sin? How long is it since I saw you last? I remember I saw you when you were 15, so it was 50 years ago." Her voice was charged with emotion.

Li Jang Chong had been on close terms with my father and had been active in Manchuria together with him. She had often called at my home together with other champions of the independence movement.

Her real name was Li Gwan Rin. She had been only a little girl when she visited our home and now she was very affectionate towards me.

At the age of 17 she, as a Korean woman revolutionary and armed with a pistol, had raided a Japanese police substation. She had a great reputation as a woman general.

This event was widely reported in the newspapers *Tonga Ilbo* and *Choson Ilbo* at the time.

I recalled with emotion the days when I had read them.

She grasped my hands warmly and told me about how she had fared.

According to her, the President, told of the fact that she was living in China, had sent for her to bring her to the homeland so that she could live comfortably there for the rest of her life.

Whilst touching a handkerchief to her eyes frequently, she said

that he had provided comfortable living conditions for her in Pyongyang, called on her home often out of sympathy and generally took care of her.

I also met the bereaved family of Ryang Se Bong, commander of the Independence Army. He was the only commander of the nationalist independence army who had fought to the last without yielding against the brigandish Japanese imperialists in south Manchuria, even though they had intensified their offensive after the Manchurian incident.

His family lived in a house that was hemmed in with willows on the Potong Plain near the Potong River. When my car pulled up in front of the porch, the wife of Commander Ryang Se Bong who had probably received prior notice of my visit, came out and met me cheerfully, grasping my hands.

Commander Ryang Se Bong and my father had been engaged in the common cause of the independence movement, so he had frequented our home. So, when I saw her, I felt as if I was meeting my own mother.

Fortunately, that day was a holiday, so the whole family was at home. She told me of the affection and favours President Kim Il Sung had lavished on her family.

After liberation, she said, the President had given instructions to search for the commander's bereaved family as well as those of other anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs.

One day in the year following liberation, he was informed of the whereabouts of the commander's family and had immediately sent someone to them, who lived a secluded life deep in a mountain recess one thousand *ri* from the railway in northeast China and he had brought them to Pyongyang.

So the family lived happily in Pyongyang. Later, the son of the commander, who had served in the air force as an officer after military training, died unexpectedly.

The President mourned his death deeply, and said that he had failed to take good care of him. But he was delighted to learn that commander Ryang had a two-year-old grandson to succeed to the blood line, so he saw that this grandson was cured of the polio that afflicted him.

She went on to say:

“In the spring of 1960 the great leader saw to it that the remains of my husband who had been murdered cruelly by the Japanese imperialists and abandoned, headless, in the wilderness of an alien land, were brought back to the homeland and buried and a large gravestone erected.”

Aware that her story had made a great impression on me, I bade her farewell.

At this point I would like to say a word about the two daughters of Ryo Un Hyong who was assassinated in Seoul in 1947.

When he visited Pyongyang immediately after liberation Ryo Un Hyong is said to have asked the President to look after the future of his two daughters.

As he had been asked, the President brought the two daughters to Pyongyang and kept them at his home and sent them to school and then abroad to study.

Although the situation was difficult due to the June 25 war and they had gone far out of the President's sight, he discovered their whereabouts and took care of them. When I visited Pyongyang, I met Ryo Yon Gu, the elder of the two daughters of Ryo Un Hyong. At the time she held the post of deputy chief of the Secretariat of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland. (Later she was promoted to chief of the secretariat and of late she has been elected vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly.)

In the 20th century our nation has experienced great tragedy such as the loss of its sovereignty and territorial division and so quite a few people have laid down their lives for national independence and the reunification of the country and for social justice.

But every one of them is dear to President Kim Il Sung, irrespective of isms and doctrines, religious beliefs and the degree of service rendered.

The President regards it as his obligation and responsibility to find and look after them and their bereaved families with all sincerity.

I think it is usual in human life that with the passage of time after one has been separated from even the most intimate of friends, people drift farther and farther apart and ultimately forget each other.

But in the case of the President it is different.

Even if ten, twenty or fifty years have passed, he never forgets those whom he once knew and never neglects his obligations to them.

Essentially, I don't like to use the adjective "great," for I think that its indiscriminate frequent use is no good. However, I think that for President Kim Il Sung alone, it should be used.

I saw the President's great personality and bowed before it.

Far Beyond the Frontier

Great love is said to know no frontier. The personality and virtue of the President who cares for the people, loves the nation and abides by comradeship are shown not within the country alone, but in the world far beyond national boundaries.

I can prove this by citing his sincere efforts to develop agriculture in African countries.

When I met the President one day, he spoke with a great deal of sympathy about the African countries that were suffering from agricultural depression and a food shortage.

Here is a summary of his remarks.

The Tanzanian President Nyerere visited north Korea in 1981.

Tanzania is one of the countries that are experiencing a severe agricultural crisis.

The aim of his visit to Pyongyang was to obtain the assistance of north Korea, a country that reaped a bumper harvest every year by carrying out a revolution in agriculture.

He asked President Kim Il Sung to send agronomists to his country. The President sent many agrotechnicians as well as agronomists.

The President instructed them that in Tanzania they should not only run the agricultural research institute but also give technical

guidance to agricultural production on farms.

North Korean specialists did themselves full justice in their first year there.

The farms under their technical guidance harvested as much as 4.5–5 tons of maize per hectare, while the adjoining farms guided by the Tanzanians gathered 500–700 kg of maize per hectare.

This news spread all over the African Continent.

The Presidents of other African countries, too, when they visited Pyongyang, never failed to ask for agrotechnicians.

President Kim Il Sung complied with their requests without exception. But their requests grew greater and greater.

One particular country asked for as many as 5,000 people. The President promised to satisfy all their demands.

When listening to this story, I thought that President Kim Il Sung was a true internationalist. The word “internationalism” is also used in the West.

However, as for the “aid” which advanced countries give to underdeveloped areas under the name of international cooperation, it is not of an internationalist character, but is geared towards the interests of the donor countries.

A host of agrotechnicians from advanced Western countries are in Africa, I suppose.

But the food crisis in Africa is getting worse every year despite their presence. What, then, are they doing there?

In such circumstances the Western countries’ food aid to Africa must be increased continuously.

I wonder whether what is happening is not something similar to spreading disease to sell medicine.

I don’t know the number of agronomists and agrotechnicians in north Korea, but the presence of so many of its technicians in foreign countries will certainly affect its own agriculture.

However, through the President’s remarks I could perceive his determination to help agriculture in African countries develop so that the African people may rid themselves of famine and dependence on foreign countries, although this may cause

difficulties domestically.

I thought this determination could be shown only by such a leader as President Kim Il Sung who, born a son of the Korean nation that had been deprived of its national sovereignty by Japanese imperialism and experienced feudal backwardness and lived in distress, had bitterly experienced national tragedy.

Although in this article I have cited only a few instances, when I review the international situation from a new angle on the basis of what I have seen in north Korea, I find that the President's activities for helping the countries of the third world have been continuously expanded in all fields of politics, the economy and culture, and that he has acquired considerable prestige internationally.

Through my inspection of the International Friendship Exhibition on Mt. Myohyang in North Pyongan Province, I gained a clear idea of President Kim Il Sung's international standing and prestige.

The International Friendship Exhibition is a grand building which was built to house the gifts that foreign countries have presented to the President.

The exhibits number tens of thousands of items and there are an equal number that have had to be put in store because of limited space. And the gifts are still being received, so it is planned to build two more museums of the kind.

Articles are displayed from each of the five continents. The greater part of those who have presented gifts consists of politicians, scholars and other individuals and I was impressed by the fact that there were many religious men and entrepreneurs among them.

In particular, the gifts from heads of state and government and party leaders attracted my attention.

It seemed that almost all the Presidents and prime ministers of the more than 100 countries which have diplomatic relations with north Korea have sent gifts. Many items were rare treasures, but some items seemed ordinary. However, according to my guide, these were not ordinary, but had been made with the utmost care showing reverence for President Kim Il Sung.

For instance, the upper part of the axis of a small wooden globe

sent by one country was inscribed with the word “Juche.”

If this is considered either in the light of artistic value as a wooden sculpture or in money terms, it counts for hardly anything.

But I was told that according to its donator it expresses his view that the world would move, guided by the Juche idea advocated by President Kim Il Sung.

I don't wish to enlarge on my impressions here and there is no need to do so.

But I would like to add just a few words. A head of state may exchange gifts with those of other countries, but I wonder if there has been any leader who has received a gift like the wooden globe which bears so deep a meaning.

When we look back upon our nation's past, even the name Korea was not known to the world and the name was unfamiliar to many, but today tens of thousands of gifts are displayed at the International Friendship Exhibition, and that gives us much to think over.

The President said that all these gifts were not to be owned by him but were treasures, the common property of the nation, and he saw to it that a museum was built on the scenic spot of Mt. Myohyang and that they were displayed there for all the people. This is another aspect of the President's noble personality and virtue.

The Life of Government

By compiling what I have spoken about in the previous three sections, I would like to draw the character of President Kim Il Sung, so to speak, and express my opinion on how he should be ranked among the great men and saints of all ages and countries.

When naming the saints of the world, we usually mention Confucius, Buddha and Christ from the old times and sometimes the name of Mahatma Gandhi of India in recent times.

Needless to say, all of them belong to the class of saint. Without doubt, thanks to them human thought, morality and culture have made a lot of progress.

They are characterized by distinguished ideas and noble virtue.

In the sense that a saint can be defined as someone who has reached the highest conceivable standards, he is a perfect man in every aspect, I think.

In my view, many saints have appeared in the world, but people are still wandering and mankind is still suffering. The saints earnestly preached the love of man and of one's neighbours, but the day is still far off when their religious and humanistic ideals will be realized on earth.

The absurdity of the rich exploiting the poor and of large nations dominating small ones still persists, although it has assumed a different form. The danger of a world holocaust through nuclear war is steadily growing.

And at this very juncture, in one corner of the earth there appeared a great man who illuminates the road ahead for nations and mankind and puts his ideas into effect one after another.

He is President Kim Il Sung.

As I have said before, by formulating the man-centred Juche idea, the idea that attaches the greatest importance to man, the President has shown the way to build an ideal land on earth for the people, which religious men in the past said would be found in the next world.

In this sense, I am inclined to call President Kim Il Sung the thinker of thinkers.

President Kim Il Sung, I believe, is not only a great thinker but also a great statesman.

Not everyone can be called a statesman. All those who hold key posts in government cannot be statesmen. I think that although there are many people in the world who are engaged in politics, most of them are no more than "politicians" or "politickers" but only a few deserve to be called statesmen.

President Kim Il Sung is the statesman of statesmen, a great statesman.

History shows that many great men have advocated noble political ideas, but few have put them into effect.

In the past Confucius travelled the vast land of China with a view to materializing his political ideal, but wherever he went he

found it impossible to hold even a minor government post to experiment with his ideal and finally he ended his career and handed over his doctrine to his disciples.

But by implementing the political principles of the Juche idea in the present generation, President Kim Il Sung has built a blessed land in the northern half of the country and inspired in large and small nations a hope for the future.

That is why I call President Kim Il Sung a great statesman.

I am convinced that in all respects President Kim Il Sung is not only an outstanding thinker and statesman but also a great man of virtue.

Our Chondoism preaches benevolent administration and relief of the poor and President Kim Il Sung has boundless virtue capable of relieving the suffering of everyone.

The President's virtue has created a paradise on earth only in the northern half of the country, but I believe the day will come when it will extend to the whole Korean nation and it will enjoy national prosperity and peace will reign over the world.

Viewed in this light, President Kim Il Sung is in every respect the great man of great men, and the saint of saints.

There is a phrase "peerless great man." Only President Kim Il Sung deserves this title.

This is a conclusion that I formed myself after having met the President and got to know of his meritorious service during my visit to north Korea.

I came to fully understand why the north Korean people wanted to remain under the leadership of President Kim Il Sung for ever.

There is an old saying that for people living under tyranny, one day feels like a thousand while under a good reign a thousand days feels like one day.

It is quite natural that the north Korean people should hope to live under the great President Kim Il Sung's government for a long time.

In this sense, I think, a distinction should be drawn between the long-term leadership of the President and so-called long-term office.

Long-term office means a man greedy for power being in the

saddle for a long time in disregard of the will of the people. This implies something similar to tyranny in Western society and in south Korean society in particular.

However, President Kim Il Sung's long-term leadership complies with the nation's will and demand.

Today some people equate the President's long-term leadership with "long-term office" or "dictatorship." This derives from an ignorance of the truth of north Korea, or it is intended as slander.

In the West, too, there are instances of popular statesmen remaining in office for a long time.

In the case of President Kim Il Sung, whenever his term of office has come to an end he has been re-elected.

It is seldom that a nation is favoured with the emergence of a great man. Blessed is the age when a great man appears.

A long life in government for a great man is a natural phenomenon because it complies with the desire of the people and the requirements of the age.

I believe it is tremendous luck for our Korean people that a great man like President Kim Il Sung has appeared in the northern half of the country and has been administering the affairs of state for so long.

The Future of the Nation

One of the questions that has created a great stir in the world recently is that of who will succeed President Kim Il Sung.

Originally, various conjectures were formed as to who would succeed President Kim Il Sung, and the news that this successor had been decided provoked much discussion.

Viewed in the light of President Kim Il Sung's standing in and influence on international political life, it is quite natural that the question of his successor became the focus of world attention.

But what is important here is that some people have formed a judgement and conclusion of their own, getting nervous because of the kinship between the President and his successor.

Moreover, from what I have heard, those who are hostile to

north Korea, some politicians of south Korea and the United States for example have spoken ill of the succession as being “hereditary.”

This is not the case only with those antagonistic to north Korea.

Similar views have been expressed even by overseas compatriots who have striven to see the reality of north Korea without prejudice.

Frankly speaking, I too had no proper understanding of the question of President Kim Il Sung’s successor prior to my first visit to north Korea. Therefore, this question naturally drew my attention during my visits there.

On one occasion I expressed my views in a roundabout way to Sonu who often accompanied me and so had become acquainted with me.

He replied, “I cannot understand why blood relationship is called so seriously into question when political leadership is transferred. It doesn’t matter whether or not a blood relationship exists between the leader and his successor, does it? The main thing is personality, isn’t it? The person we have elected as the successor to the leader is endowed with many fine qualities. That is why our people have acclaimed him of their own accord as the next leader.”

His answer was logical. I was lost for words.

He went on to say: “Today some people are apparently criticizing us, saying that we have adopted a ‘hereditary system.’ But I would like to ask them if they are so much concerned and well-wishing for our affairs that they behave themselves as they do.”

This was a calm yet cutting reproach to those who speak ill of all the goings-on in north Korea. Needless to say, his remark was evidently levelled against south Korean and US politicians and like-minded people, but I felt some remorse. So I made up my mind to consider and appraise the question of the successor to President Kim Il Sung without prejudice, from the standpoint of looking at the facts to uncover the truth.

Talks to Veteran Statesmen

The person who has been designated as the successor to

President Kim Il Sung is his eldest son, called Kim Jong Il. He was born in 1942. He holds the post of Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. It is the post invested with real power in the Party.

In view of the fact that the WPK is the Party in power in north Korea, the political standing of Secretary Kim Jong Il, who is entrusted with the leadership of the Party, is very high.

In this position, Secretary Kim Jong Il is said to assist President Kim Il Sung.

According to Sonu Secretary Kim Jong Il holds this post thanks to his distinguished personality and qualities. If that is so, what sort of person is he? During my visits to north Korea on several occasions I have had the opportunity to exchange views openly with veteran political cadres. In the course of these discussions I have acquired some idea of the personality of Secretary Kim Jong Il as the political leader and how he has become President Kim Il Sung's successor. Among the veteran cadres I met were Vice-President Kim Il and the General Secretary of the Central People's Committee Rim Chun Chu (recently he has become Vice-President in succession to the late Kang Ryang Uk).

Both of them are veteran anti-Japanese soldiers who fought for the liberation of the fatherland under the command of General Kim Il Sung, braving hardships of all descriptions from the time when General Kim Il Sung launched the anti-Japanese struggle in and around Mt. Paekdu. They are men of dignity who have held high posts in the army and in government since liberation.

Both of them rank next to President Kim Il Sung in view of their experience of the revolutionary movement and political activities and contributions.

Their hair has turned grey, after crossing numerous death lines for over 50 stormy years. I clearly perceived in them the character of old campaigners and veteran politicians, who have attained maturity. In my conversations with them, Secretary Kim Jong Il, too, was referred to. They were quite satisfied with the fact that Secretary Kim Jong Il had been acclaimed as the successor to President Kim Il Sung.

Their respect for Secretary Kim Jong Il was great. They

repeatedly stressed that it was good fortune and a source of happiness for the nation that Secretary Kim Jong Il had been named successor.

Their remarks impressed me greatly. To my knowledge, it is a common practice in communist bloc countries that when the leader grows old or dies, the successor is chosen from among the veteran cadres who have worked with him for a long time, but things are quite different in north Korea. Judging from the fact that the veteran cadres who could have been chosen as the successor hold Secretary Kim Jong Il, who belongs to the younger generation in such high esteem, I thought that he must certainly be endowed with extraordinary qualities.

“Frankly speaking, we are fascinated by the personality of the dear leader,” said General Secretary Rim Chun Chu without embarrassment.

“The dear leader” is the title used for Secretary Kim Jong Il by the people of north Korea, whether cadres or common people.

The General Secretary explained to me what attracted him to Secretary Kim Jong Il, by saying the following:

First of all, it is his gifted disposition. Secretary Kim Jong Il was so deeply versed in every branch of knowledge, including humanics and natural sciences as early as his university days that even famous scholars were not his equal.

Rim Chun Chu stressed that the Secretary was particularly conversant with the Juche philosophy authored by the President and in this field he was surpassed by none.

He lavished praise on him, saying that Secretary Kim Jong Il was not only a great scholar and a great thinker but also a person gifted with exceptional political art who advanced social progress by making the most of his knowledge and theory and through this, leading the people. Since he entered politics and began to play a part in Party work, the activities of the WPK had been intensified as never before and remarkable changes brought about in the fields of politics, the economy and culture.

Another thing is the broad magnanimity and attraction of Secretary Kim Jong Il. Whoever meets him whether old or young, is said to bow before his modesty and magnanimity. His magnanimity

being as broad as the vast sea into which all large and small rivers flow, people feel encouraged to entrust themselves to him.

The third thing is his passion and will: There is no knowing from where he derives such wonderful passion; if he applies himself to something, he will work night and day, oblivious of the need to rest. Once he has decided to do something, he pushes ahead with it with an indefatigable will until it is finished. Napoleon asserted that he did not know the meaning of the word impossibility, but in the end suffered defeat at Waterloo, the General Secretary added. But, to his knowledge, Secretary Kim Jong Il is the leader to whom nothing is impossible.

In short, if a man equipped with knowledge, benevolence and courage is called a great man, he was fascinated with the personality of Secretary Kim Jong Il who was possessed of all these qualities, he stressed.

This was a vignette of Secretary Kim Jong Il which may be considered to be a somewhat exaggerated description of a statesman who is still young. However, I thought that we should not be deaf to it because it is the opinion of those who have reached old age having experienced all manner of hardship.

As if reading the doubts in my mind, they said that his exceptional personality had manifested itself as early as his childhood as the saying goes, a flourishing tree can be recognized from its shoot.

Secretary Kim Jong Il was born in dramatic circumstances on February 16, 1942 when the anti-Japanese guerrilla war led by General Kim Il Sung was entering its final stages. He was born on the field of battle, which was fateful to the nation, as the eldest son of the brilliant anti-Japanese commander General Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Suk who had fought with valour alongside the General in the guerrilla war and was known as an anti-Japanese heroine.

After his birth he grew up with, so to speak, the thick forest of Mt. Paekdu as his cradle, listening to the gunshots of the valiant soldiers of the anti-Japanese revolutionary army, instead of lullabies.

If the surroundings in which one is born and grows up exert a great influence on the formation of one's character, it is quite easy

to imagine what influence the extraordinary surroundings and the excellent education by his parents had on Secretary Kim Jong Il in his childhood.

As an indication of how bright and advanced the Secretary was in his childhood, they related to me various episodes which had struck people with admiration. Space does not allow me to give full details of them here, so I would like only to touch on how the veterans came to acclaim the Secretary as the leader of the WPK and the successor to the President, having witnessed at first hand how he grew up and how his outstanding character had been formed.

It is only in recent years that Secretary Kim Jong Il's political standing has come to be officially recognized abroad, but I was told that it was some time ago that he was elected Secretary of the Central Committee of the WPK and member of the Political Bureau of the WPK and acclaimed as the successor to the President.

At the beginning of the 1970s when the President reached the age of 60, the veteran cadres of north Korea began to think of the future of the nation. They were keenly aware of the necessity of having a successor who would be true to and assist President Kim Il Sung who had fought so devotedly for the country, nation and the revolution all his life and rendered lasting service, and take over his leadership.

Then their eyes turned upon the young politician Secretary Kim Jong Il who was in his early thirties. They reached the unanimous conclusion that only he was qualified in every respect to be the successor of the President. But they scarcely achieved their intention because of the President's objection.

His reasons for objecting were two-fold. One was that he was his son. Reminding the President of the fact that when he was younger than him, he had guided the revolution and state-building, the veteran cadres stressed that the Secretary was by no means young for a political leader. They reasoned with him that in public work for the country and nation the first consideration should be given to personality, transcending kinship. However, the President did not readily accept their suggestion. Recalling those days, General Secretary Rim Chun Chu said that Secretary Kim Jong Il would have been acclaimed as our leader earlier had he not been the President's

son.

At the time they drew courage from the people's support.

Around that time the Central Committee of the WPK was flooded with letters from its members and people from all parts of the country, which suggested acclaiming the Secretary as the leader to assist the President.

Encouraged by this, the veterans told the President repeatedly that it was the people's determined will and hope that the Secretary should one day become leader.

Thus, the question was formally brought up for discussion and at last a decision was reached to acclaim Secretary Kim Jong Il as the leader of the Party.

The People's Desire

One day I made time to meet Sonu. I wanted to have my doubts removed.

I had been told that the north Korean people eagerly desired that the Secretary should be the President's successor. The anti-Japanese veterans who had known him well since his childhood might have wanted this, but I wondered how the common people came to know his personality and express such great respect and hope for him. When I heard that it was only in recent years that the Secretary had become known officially in the political life of north Korea, I wondered when he had begun to acquire the confidence of the people.

So first I met Sonu to satisfy my curiosity. I wanted to ask him questions freely. When I raised these questions, he replied with a smile:

"Yes. It was in the early 1960s that the dear leader went into politics after graduating from university. At that time few people knew his name. However, he gradually earned fame and began to be widely discussed."

According to Sonu, in the late sixties' Secretary Kim Jong Il's activities began to cause an even greater sensation in society. With the great change he produced in literature and art, he held a firm grip on the people's minds.

In those days the Secretary took up and guided the work of developing literature and art in pursuance of the President's intention, which ushered in a golden age of literature and art. In north Korea this is called the "revolution in literature and art." The revolution in art was started by renovating film production and spread to opera and then the music, painting and the circus, thus sweeping across all the fields of art. All this was conceived, planned and guided by the Secretary.

As I have mentioned before, whenever I visited north Korea I frequently admired the national yet sound beautiful art which is quite different from that of south Korea, America and other Western countries.

I heard say that the Pyongyang Art Troupe has made fours of France, Italy and Japan since the early '70s, causing a great sensation, and has won for north Korea acclaim as "the fountainhead of the 20th century Renaissance."

It is thanks to Secretary Kim Jong Il that such art has been produced. Hence, it is quite natural, Sonu said, that the north Korean people now entertain such great respect for the Secretary who has brought glory on the nation. It was around that time that north Korean artists began to call the Secretary "our dear leader" and other people gradually followed suit.

Sonu went on to say that Secretary Kim Jong Il, who had attracted the admiration of the people by effecting a revolution in art, was now blazing a trail for industrial automation and once again arousing people's admiration.

Having attained the objectives of industrialization towards the end of the '60s and in the early '70s, the north Korean economy entered a new phase of development, so the President set industrial automation as the next main task. The policy of industrial automation set out by the President was aimed not merely at accelerating economic development, but, even more important, at relieving the working people of backbreaking and harmful labour and at further reducing the distinction between mental and physical labour. But, for north Korea, which was still on the way to developing industrial automation, this was a tremendous undertaking, so no one dared to tackle it.

At this time one enterprise was carrying out automation quietly. It was the Hwanghae Iron Works. The process was directed by Secretary Kim Jong Il. He realized that people were hesitating to take the road to automation, and that its introduction was inevitable and indispensable, so he was determined to effect it first at the Hwanghae Iron Works, a leading enterprise in north Korea, which had still not rid itself of technical backwardness because it had been built in the days of Japanese imperialist rule.

He planned to effect industrial automation across the country, according to the example set at the Hwanghae Iron Works. Thanks to Secretary Kim Jong Il's energetic guidance, the works was quickly converted into a modern automated factory. People were amazed at the news. The allegations that automation was possible only in advanced countries and that it could not be introduced without their technical assistance were destroyed. All the enterprises in the country set to the task of automation.

My compatriots in north Korea say that the age of automation began at that time and that its pioneer was Secretary Kim Jong Il.

In the course of this, the people's confidence in and expectations of him have multiplied.

It is widely said that the Secretary is a genius with versatile abilities and that his guidance brings about an immediate and radical change in art, the economy and any other field. Everybody hopes to meet him if only once and receive his guidance. The Secretary always works among the people and is their close friend. He is very modest and simple in speech and behaviour, so there are many instances where people marvelled with the remark "Oh, it was him," realizing who he was only after they had talked on friendly terms with him or received his guidance.

Sonu told me some interesting stories. Here is one of them.

In early August 1967 a train left Chongjin for Pyongyang in the heavy rain. When the train pulled in at a small station on the east coast, a girl got out on to the platform quickly. She was a young announcer on the public-address system on the train. During the stop she wanted to reconnect a severed wire in order to carry on broadcasting.

But things did not go as well as she had hoped in the heavy rain.

Suddenly the rain stopped falling on her, and she could hear only pattering above her head. She was sure that some kindly person had put up an umbrella for her.

She was too busy to look behind her, so she simply expressed her thanks. The train was about to leave, but she pulled on the line so rashly that it broke. Good Heavens! No time! She sighed in distress, but then she heard a tender voice behind her.

“Use the electric wire of the carriage to link it up.” The girl’s eyes instantly glistened like morning stars. Dear me! Why didn’t I think of that, she thought. After linking up the wire, she turned around. She saw a young man with a bright smile on his face, holding an umbrella. His clothes and shoes were soaked. “Oh, my! your clothes...” She was sorry.

“It doesn’t matter if clothes get wet,” he said cheerfully. With this he continued to hold the umbrella over her until she had got onto the steps. She was grateful to him, wondering if he was leading railway man.

The train had begun to move when she was amazed to learn that he was Secretary Kim Jong Il. She rushed towards the steps, but he was no longer there.

As stories of this kind spread warming the hearts of the people, they began to respect and follow Secretary Kim Jong Il, calling him “the dear leader.” They became firmer in the belief that no one but he was entitled to take over President Kim Il Sung’s leadership and take the future of the country on his shoulders. The essence of democracy is to respect and follow the will of the people. The President could no more suppress the desire of the people to regard Secretary Kim Jong Il as their leader, Sonu said.

He went on to say that the view of the people was correct and their expectations were not misplaced.

Appointed to a high post in the WPK, the Secretary gave full play to his extraordinary ability as a political leader and accelerated the social development of north Korea. In conclusion, Sonu said, the credit must go to him for the development of the nation’s power in the ’70s and the promotion of the welfare of the people and in particular the strengthening of national unity around President Kim Il Sung.

“If you see the reality of our country, you will realize how outstanding his administrative achievements are and what deep confidence the people place in him,” Sonu added.

My Observation

After that, when I made a tour of different parts of north Korea, I tried to see the reality in the context of Secretary Kim Jong Il, because I wanted to see with my own eyes and confirm the Secretary’s political achievements and his popularity among the people.

As I had expected, wherever I went I could see the evidence of his administrative achievements and hear the people voicing their respect and praise for Secretary Kim Jong Il. I cannot mention here all of what I saw, but let me refer to one or two instances.

The first happened during my visit to the Hwanghae Iron Works which, as I have mentioned before, started industrial automation under the leadership of Secretary Kim Jong Il.

After inspecting the automated industrial facilities at the works, I was advised to visit the Unryul Mine which is closely associated with the works. So we drove to the mine. The Unryul Mine is located on the west coast of Korea and feeds iron ore to the works. I found it was a strip mine which, to my surprise, was equipped with a conveyer system for disposing of waste. From the mine the conveyer stretches to the shore and then far out to sea, to where it carries and discharges waste ceaselessly.

This was the first time I had seen such a magnificent conveyer belt.

A young operator of the conveyer belt in the control room told me the following story in answer to my question.

The demand of the iron works for iron ore had rapidly increased as its production capacity expanded as a result of the introduction of automation.

To meet this demand the Unryul Mine had to mine more iron ore. This raised the problem of the disposal of waste. It didn’t pay to obtain more trucks to carry it away. Was there no better idea? Everyone was dubious, shaking their heads.

On hearing of this problem, Secretary Kim Jong Il suggested disposing of the waste by conveyer belt. A technician went to the mine and came back with a plan for laying a conveyer from the mine to the shore to discharge the waste into the sea. For him it was a bold plan. But the Secretary was not satisfied with it. Spreading the map, he made a mark with a red pencil.

He drew a red line from the shore to an offshore island and again to the islands scattered to the north and south.

If the waste was disposed of by a conveyer belt laid along that line on the sea, the Unryul Mine would be able to increase ore production markedly and an area equivalent to one county would be reclaimed from the sea in the not too distant future. If such projects were undertaken repeatedly, the map of the country would have to be redrawn.

Such was the Secretary's plan.

Looking at the map, the technician was aghast. However, the magnificent project was immediately started.

Looking from the observation platform, over the conveyer belt stretching far into the sea, it occurred to me that the Secretary who had worked out such a plan must be person with a great mind.

The structure showed the great ambition with which Secretary Kim Jong Il, a young politician, was shaping the future of the country and the nation.

As I was in Hwanghae Province, I wanted to make a tour of Mt. Kuwol as well. So, we drove towards the mountain. Reaching the foot of Mt. Kuwol, I found a small village skirted by a crystal clear stream called "Sujong" (crystal-clear) River. There was a bridge across the river. It was not a wooden bridge which one usually sees in valleys, but a neat, rainbow-shaped concrete one.

Fortunately, there was an old passenger there. When I inquired about the bridge he told me it was called the "bridge of love" and then he related the following story:

One December day in 1973 the children of the village were carefully crossing the river, using the stepping stones, on their way to school, when an approaching car stopped. A young cadre got out and watched the children. When the children had crossed, he asked them what they did if the river swells in the summer, although they

can cross it by the stepping stones and go to school in the dry season.

The children replied that their father, mother, brother or sister would carry them across the river on their back.

“Carry you on their back?” he retorted, looking worried. Some time later workers arrived at the village and built a fine bridge across the Sujong River. Secretary Kim Jong Il saw to it that it was built.

That day Secretary Kim Jong Il had passed by the village and told a cadre concerned to build a solid concrete bridge so that the children could go to school without any worries. But the look of the cadre had suggested the question of how such a bridge could be built at such great expense only for a few schoolchildren. However, the Secretary remarked that the children, the jewels of the country, should not be appraised simply by their number and repeatedly told him that a bridge should be built without fail, even for one or two pupils. Informed of this the children’s parents named the bridge over the Sujong River the “bridge of love.” This story demonstrates the Secretary’s meticulous care and benevolence, in contrast with his vigour and boldness which were demonstrated by the huge marine conveyer belt at Unryul. This is what I thought, as I touched the handrail of the “bridge of love.”

Pyongyang is a magnificent and clean city. The new buildings that add to the beauty of Pyongyang are all associated with the leadership of President Kim Il Sung and Secretary Kim Jong Il.

Mansudae Art Theatre, the Changgwang Health Complex, Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, the Arch of Triumph, the Tower of Juche Idea and others which are referred to above, are said to have been built under the auspices and leadership of Secretary Kim Jong Il.

I visited Pyongyang for the second time in April 1982, ten months after my first visit. When I looked over east Pyongyang across the Taedong River as I drove along the foot of Moran Hill on my way from the airport to Pyongyang, a marvellous scene came into view.

On a vast space which had been empty ten months before, a new city had sprung up bristling with low and tall buildings all in

perfect harmony. It reminded me of part of Paris near the Seine. It was Munsu Street, built under the guidance of Secretary Kim Jong Il, I was told. Of course, superficial comparison is pointless, but Paris was built in several hundred years, whereas Munsu Street had been erected in less than a year. According to a European saying, "Rome was not built in a day," but this does not apply to Secretary Kim Jong Il, I thought.

Also, I thought to myself that the Secretary is the politician who hastens and moves time with the force of a hurricane and of an angry wave and races ahead into the future.

A noted statesman such as he deserves to be given wide publicity through the mass media. Whenever I visited north Korea, I made careful observations, but there was no report about his political activities in the press, over the radio or on TV. I wondered about this and made inquiries, only to be told that the Secretary himself prevented it in every way possible.

I have one more word to say. Secretary Kim Jong Il rarely attends mass rallies or other public functions held in north Korea. He refrains from attending public functions, the guide said, because he regards it as his duty to work unnoticed behind the scenes as an assistant to President Kim Il Sung. This reminded me of the modesty with which he declines to attend public functions and receive bouquets, a token of the good wishes of the people, although he works a great deal for them.

Foreigners' Views

There is a saying that, "If one wins the hearts of the people, one will win the world." In the East this was regarded as essential for a leader. One can be leader only when one wins the confidence and support of the people. If one loses one's reputation, one will cease to be a leader. In this sense, the saying is common and holds true for both the East and the West, I think.

As the political history of the world shows, one cannot make oneself a leader by force and such a leader will not remain in power for long.

That the Secretary was elected as leader was based on the people's confidence. It was not based on the manipulation of public

opinion or a temporary popularity ploy which are usual occurrences in the West, but on the unshakable confidence placed in him by the people because of his outstanding personality and his many years' unseen service for them.

I confirmed this in my talks with north Korean cadres and by my observations of the true situation in north Korea.

The functions celebrating President Kim Il Sung's 70th birthday held in April 1982 offered a good opportunity for me to see the personality of Secretary Kim Jong Il as the people's leader in a new light. I attended the functions along with guests from all parts of the world, where I conversed with them and heard their views. Many of them expressed their respect for Secretary Kim Jong Il, admiring his leadership ability and envied the future of the north Korean people, who had such an outstanding politician as successor to President Kim Il Sung.

One day the newspapers reported the courtesy visit of President Kaunda of Zambia to President Kim Il Sung and carried a poem written by him and dedicated to the President in honour of his 70th birthday.

I read the poem with interest and it ended with a phrase expressing his good wishes to Secretary Kim Jong Il, who would succeed the President.

Why do foreigners and, moreover, heads of state pay their respects to and extol Secretary Kim Jong Il to such an extent? In my opinion, it is without doubt because they have seen the reality of north Korea, which is changing and advancing day by day and recognized his meritorious service associated with this.

I have always been very eager to be received by Secretary Kim Jong Il or at least see him at close quarters, but this is my only desire that has not been satisfied. It is because he very rarely attends public functions, as I have already mentioned.

When I was received by President Kim Il Sung on May 3, 1982, I told him that it was a good thing and a source of great happiness for the Korean nation that the young leader Secretary Kim Jong Il would shoulder the future of the nation in the northern half of the country.

Having no opportunity to pay my respects to the Secretary

directly, I wanted to convey my good wishes through the President. The President thanked me with a smile.

What I said to the President was not a compliment for courtesy's sake. Even now I can confirm that my words expressed my sincere feelings and were based on the impressions I had received from my repeated visits to north Korea and represented my conclusive judgement.

To speak ill of the fact that Secretary Kim Jong Il went into politics as the successor to President Kim Il Sung is unreasonable and derived from an ignorance of the true situation in north Korea or a practice of those who fear the future, when north Korea will become stronger, I believe. The independence cause started by President Kim Il Sung will be carried on with credit by Secretary Kim Jong Il.

Bright is the future of our Korean nation.

This is my unswerving conviction.

My Opinions

In the previous chapters I have described in various ways what I saw, heard and felt during my visits to north Korea.

Of course, I do not think that I have given a full account of the true situation. I am unable to do so; I am neither a journalist nor a writer. From the beginning I had no mind to do so any way.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, I, who have experienced the bitter twists and turns of fate, visited north Korea in the twilight of my life in search of a new path for the nation to follow and, prompted by this desire, wrote about the things I saw and felt there.

And, among other things, there I discovered the true national identity of the Korean people and the solid basis for national reunification and prosperity.

This means that in my wandering life I, although belatedly, discovered the road which the nation and the country can follow with an explicit aim and great confidence.

In this sense, I would like, in concluding this article, to make clear again my opinions on the question of national reunification and make some suggestions concerning it.

Giving Paramount Consideration to the Nation Alone Leads to Reunification

Reunification is a matter of vital importance to our nation today. But the question is serious because the tragedy of national division has continued for nearly 40 years, which is longer than the period

of Japanese imperialist colonial rule.

So, I think that at the present juncture the road for the nation to take, the patriotic road is, in the long run, represented by the road to reunification. Through my visits to north Korea I have discovered this road.

First of all, I must say here that reunification should be realized whatever the cost and that it can be realized.

Although this is likely to seem an uncalled-for remark, I stress it, because in my opinion the theory that reunification is impossible and a pessimistic view of reunification have emerged to hamper gravely the aspiration of the people for reunification and this has become a more serious problem with the passage of time.

Both the theory that reunification is impossible and the pessimistic view of reunification are based on the fact that the social systems of the north and the south are incompatible and in direct confrontation with each other. The north will never yield its confirmed communist idea and system and the south likewise its capitalist system.

So the extreme assertion is still heard that if reunification is to be achieved, the differences in social system should be removed by a war between the south and the north. In spite of the bitter lesson of the June 25 war which was provoked for “reunification through a northward march” some of the authorities in south Korea still advocate “reunification by prevailing over communism” and “reunification through the annihilation of communism” and in their attempts to justify this, they preach the “threat of southward invasion” from the north.

And they plead that in order to avoid calamity of a fratricidal war which would be contingent to such a showdown, the north and the south should simply coexist, divided as they are.

In short, in their opinion, the July 4 North-South Joint Statement which demands that the differences in ideology, ideals and social system should be transcended, is no more than empty talk and, though everyone desires reunification, it can never be realized in practice. What is significant here is that ideology and system are being made absolute.

What preoccupied me, too, during my self-imposed exile abroad,

determined as I was to achieve national reunification, to say nothing of while I was in south Korea, was the problem of the different ideologies and systems in the north and the south.

Opportunely, I came to acquaint myself with north Korea's new proposal for reunification, the keynote of which is to found a confederal state leaving the different systems in the north and the south intact. It attracted my attention because it seemed to me the most desirable and feasible of all the proposals for reunification which had been advanced so far by the two sides.

But, frankly speaking, before my visit to north Korea it seemed to me only a tiny fire flickering on the remote horizon.

Of course, as regards this proposal, I did not entirely believe the words of abuse that it was nothing but the "propaganda" of the north Korean communists. But the question was to discover the true motive that lay behind the proposal, among other things, and the fundamental stance of the north Korean authorities and people towards the question of reunification in particular.

I can say with confidence that through my two visits to north Korea I got a clear-cut answer to this question.

Needless to say, I visited north Korea in the capacity of a private citizen. However, on many occasions I met men of different ranks and classes as well as high-ranking officials and we exchanged candid views about reunification. In the course of this I became fully aware of the opinions of the north Korean communists on the nation and reunification and was struck with admiration at their straight forwardness.

Their desire for reunification is earnest and sincere and quite literally they set it as a supreme task.

They unanimously stress national identity and rate national reunification above communism. Their belief is: if there is no nation, communism is of no use; if there is no nation, "an earthly paradise" cannot be built. In short, although they are communists, they do not make class and communism absolute but they do put the nation above all other things and subordinate the latter to the former.

I could easily understand that the talk of the north Koreans of giving precedence to the nation was not aimed simply at appealing

to the ears of others, but represented their steadfast belief. This is because, as I have already mentioned, I witnessed that their socialism is a nation-orientated socialism that differs from what is commonly imagined. From the bottom of my heart I felt that giving precedence to the nation was the fundamental principle and the only solution to the question of reunification.

Giving paramount consideration to the nation for the realization of reunification means to reduce ideological conflict and antagonism between the north and the south and to promote unity and seek a road to reunification from the standpoint of one nation.

This is because the question of national reunification is a matter of great importance to the nation to which no one can remain indifferent whether he be nationalist or communist, theist or atheist. That we are the Korean people should be set above the fact that we are nationalists or communists, and we are all Koreans whether there are Christians, Buddhists or Chondoists among us.

The same is true with the question of system.

Those who advocate attaching the greatest importance to the nation require, while admitting the difference and identity of systems, that they should not be made absolute, but that they be subordinated to the demand for reunification, the common task of the nation, and seek a road to reunification on the basis of the national community.

This is seen to be right when viewed in the light of the fact that the nation is more deep-rooted than the system. In fact, it can be said that a nation is the most solid community that is bound together by a common fate which cannot be chosen, while a system represents changeable social relations which can be adopted or rejected in accordance with the interests of individuals and different social strata. Also, when one looks at human history one can find that various social systems have been replaced in one nation's history, but this has not meant that the nation has been replaced.

A nation is an eternal being, while a system is a being that rises and falls in the course of human history.

All this proves that a system cannot deny a nation and the former can exist only on the basis of the nation.

In this sense, I came to understand the real meaning of north

Korea's new proposal to achieve reunification in a way that both the south under a capitalist system and the north give the greatest consideration to the common national idea and the two systems maintain their respective independent positions, and I approved of it.

Of course, it is without historical precedent to form a unified state that leaves two different systems intact.

However, I think that if one only does things that have precedents, and rejects things unprecedented, there will be no creation or historical progress at all, and that if the nation is considered before all other things and reunification is set as the task of paramount importance, precedents assume no significance.

So, I believe that we should boldly set out to forge a new path, resolved to achieve the great cause of national reunification in an unprecedented way.

Another important question is that of the position to be adopted by the unified state.

Our country is surrounded by large countries and they are competing bitterly among themselves.

It is most desirable, therefore, that the unified state does not become a satellite of any foreign country but become independent, peaceful, non-aligned and neutral. This, too, is elucidated in north Korea's new proposal for reunification.

There is another reason why I came readily to understand and approve this proposal, and it pertains to my personal affairs.

Once I had been an advisor to the "Board for National Unification" under the Pak regime. It was usually the practice in south Korea for a newly-appointed minister of the board to visit West Germany allegedly to consult on and study the question of reunification.

Whenever such a visit was made, I would advise the visitor to see not only Germany, but also neighbouring Austria which had already been reunified.

Here I had two things in mind.

The first was that in my opinion the situation in Germany was different from ours. Unlike our country Germany was a defeated

nation and in its history it frequently invaded other countries. In addition, neither East nor West Germany wants reunification.

So, I believed that a trip to West Germany was very much a trip to discover a way of not reunifying our country rather than seeking a path for its reunification.

The other thing was that the Austrian situation was similar to our own and it had achieved national reunification in ten years when it was occupied by foreign troops.

It can be said that while in Europe, Nazi Germany started World War II by annexing Austria, in Asia, Japan, which had occupied Manchuria, invaded the Chinese mainland and unleashed the Pacific war, annexed Korea. In this respect Japan and Germany are war criminals and our country and Austria are war victims.

Moreover, just as after being freed from the rule of Nazi Germany in 1945 Austria was divided and occupied by four countries—the US, Britain, France and the USSR, so after the surrender of the Japanese imperialists the US and Soviet armies were stationed in the south and north of our country respectively.

After liberation Austria called those who had served Germany in the days of Nazi occupation traitors to the nation and deprived them of the right to participate in government. Then it held a general election. The Liberal Party, the People's Party, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and various other parties and groups joined together with national reunification as common aim and formed a coalition government. Thus, it achieved national reunification in May 1955. And all foreign troops were withdrawn in October of that year and the National Assembly announced Austria's permanent neutrality.

I, who had been following such a grand patriotic and national scheme with keen interest, thought that it would serve as a good lesson for our country and strongly urged that we should learn from Austria.

However, my suggestion could not be accepted by the pro-US and pro-Japanese sycophants who ruled the roost in south Korea.

Yet, I could not change my belief and so restated it even after my emigration. I expressed it at the symposia for national reunification of Korean scholars living in foreign countries.

With this belief, I came to regard the new proposal advanced by north Korea to form a north-south confederal state as a truly realistic and reasonable one.

I think it is no accident that this proposal has gained the approval of many of those who have launched the movement for democratic reunification abroad.

Although I am not a communist, simply out of desire to save the destiny of the nation, I have the sincere desire that the proposal is put into effect at the earliest possible date.

Of course, we must further explore the question of how to concretely define the organizational form of a confederal state and the function of its government which are to be established through a north-south union, as well as other matters. Here, from the standpoint of seeking the realization of the proposal, I should like to reaffirm a few basic requirements which I made clear on July 16, 1981 at the meeting with Vice-President Kim II, Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, which are as follows:

Firstly, a national congress for reunification (tentative name) should be convened with various parties and groups from the north and the south participating, as well as people from different strata at home and abroad, in order to facilitate the formation of a confederal state.

I think that if the south Korean side cannot take part in the congress for the present, only the people from all walks of life in north Korea and abroad can be represented at it, initially. Especially, since most of those Koreans living in North America and Europe came from the south, they can represent the popular will. It is advisable to hold this congress in a third country first and then in Pyongyang.

Secondly, all democrats in detention should be released and reinstated so that all the representatives of democrats, the youth and students, intellectuals, workers and peasants in south Korea, except for the Chon Du Hwan clique which has slaughtered the masses, can take part in the congress.

The present south Korean regime cannot represent the south Korean people, so it should be excluded from any discussions on the

question of reunification.

Thirdly, the US army must withdraw from our country and the armistice must be replaced by a peace treaty.

Fourthly, when the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo is formed in the future, it should repeal the “south Korea–Japan treaty” and, moreover, cancel the “Korea–Japan Annexation Treaty” and the “Ulsa Protectorate Treaty” root and all.

I discovered the path for the nation, the path to reunification, although belatedly. I will devote the rest of my life to it.

I am convinced that this is the only way to atone for my past, uphold the will of my deceased father and help the nation and the motherland.

Some Things I Would Like to Tell to My South Korean Compatriots

Reunification is the way to save the nation and to put its history on the right track and it is also a way to live out today.

We have been craving for the day of reunification for a long time and sometimes fought for it. How many known or unknown patriots must have departed this life, leaving their patriotic resentment behind!

This eager desire for reunification, however, has not been fulfilled and the situation around us is becoming worse and worse. If this state of affairs is allowed to continue, the day of reunification will be put off indefinitely. This is indeed fearful.

We can no longer waste time and energy, I believe. It is important for all of us to be awakened and rouse ourselves to solving the question of reunification.

In this sense, though I may seem to be thrusting myself forward, I would like to offer a few remarks to the south Korean compatriots who should pave the way for national salvation and reunification together with us.

I think that, first of all, one factor that is detrimental to reunification should be considered, because there exists a casual factor in the delay in reunification and it must be correctly

understood before it can be successfully done away with.

In this respect, we should all examine ourselves closely and learn a lesson, I believe.

In south Korea, democracy has so far been regarded as the only fundamental prerequisite for achieving national reunification and an energetic anti-dictatorship campaign for democracy has been fought.

However, the question arises as to whether reunification can be achieved through introducing democracy alone and whether democracy can be implemented to such an extent as to achieve reunification.

This is not a theoretical, but a practical problem.

As for the movement for democracy the south Korean compatriots have demonstrated their heroism to the whole world through their struggle, I think. The history of bloody resistance ranging from the April 19 to the Kwangju Uprisings is their pride which should be inscribed in golden letters.

But the point is what they have achieved. As a sequel, we have witnessed only the further strengthening of the military dictatorship instead of the introduction of democracy.

Here we cannot but reflect that something has gone wrong.

It is not that the movement for democracy itself is wrong. But we have learnt the bloody lesson that by a struggle for democracy alone we can achieve neither democracy nor reunification.

We have to admit that prior to the Kwangju incident we had no true appreciation of the movement for democracy. None of us were free of the old idea that the replacement of a dictatorial regime would be enough to make democracy a reality. This meant that we adopted a West-European idea, namely, the idea that democracy could be introduced into an independent country with its own identity. In other words, the specific situation in south Korea was not taken into consideration.

The "specific situation in south Korea" is, in effect, the domination by foreign forces. And the foreign forces are from nowhere else but the United States.

Nevertheless, up to this date we have attended on the United

States as the “benefactor of our liberation,” “our supporter” and “friend” and considered south Korea as being independent. And when launching the movement for democracy we have even expected the favour and support of the United States.

With such fixed ideas, we believed that if the dictatorial regime was simply overthrown, both democracy and reunification could be realized.

Every one of our tragedies has derived from the fact that we did not understand the United States and failed to face up to the true nature of its policy towards south Korea.

I can say that this was also the reason for my following a road that was inconsistent with that for the nation in south Korea.

The great significance of the Kwangju incident lies in the fact that through the blood that was shed, the veil was stripped from the secret policy of the United States towards south Korea.

As was the case with the April 19 uprising, the Kwangju incident showed that the United States is the real dominator of south Korea.

As for the dictatorial regime, it is an instrument of the United States’ domination of south Korea and can deservedly be called a puppet to camouflage its true character. If the US army was not in south Korea and it did not dominate the country, we could achieve the democracy for which the struggle was launched as early as the April 19 uprising and, beyond that, open the door to reunification.

In short, the lessons of history and the reality of today clearly demonstrate that as long as the US army is present in south Korea and its domination is not ended, neither democracy nor national reunification can be achieved.

This indicates that our democratic, save-the-nation movement aimed simply at bringing democracy should be switched over to an anti-US national independence movement.

In fact, it can be said that the flame that shot up from the American Cultural Centre in Pusan served as a torchlight blazing the way we should follow. This daring action of Kim Hyon Jang, Mun Bu Sik and other young patriots served as a testimony, which was made at the risk of the lives of these young people, of the fact that while in the past patriotism meant opposition to Japan, today’s patriotism can be nothing else but opposition to the United States

and without opposition to the United States, democracy and national salvation is simply a pipe dream.

However, this does not mean that we should abandon or neglect the democratic movement.

The necessity of the above-mentioned switchover is derived from our understanding that we cannot solve the question if we ignore the outside forces, the chief obstacle to democracy and reunification, and resort to achieving democracy by overthrowing just the dictatorial regime, the stooge. Therefore, the switchover means that the movement for democracy should always be linked with a movement for national independence and that this movement should be launched under the banner of national independence.

In this sense, we can say that the movement for democracy against dictatorship remains as important a task as ever for us and it should be stepped up in the future.

Because the present military regime in south Korea represents the traitorous reactionary group that stands for the interests of the United States and executes its policy towards south Korea, a blow dealt at this regime must be aimed at the American domination of south Korea.

The point is, essentially, to adopt the right course and stratagem for the national salvation movement and strive unyieldingly and energetically.

This switchover which has opened up a new phase is still in its initial stages. I think that in order to march boldly along this new path it is important for us to break from the practice of worshipping and fearing America and from the self-depreciation and self-despair which prevail among us.

Our nation has a long history and is by no means an inferior nation. We must restore the spirit of the Korean nation for the sake of national dignity and honour. In this way, all of us must hold high the banner of patriotism, like the heroes of Kwangju and the young patriots of Pusan.

Our great cause is not one which can be carried out by only a few elite people. Irrespective of the youth and students, public officials, scholars, men of the press, workers and peasants, no one

can remain a passive onlooker to this great national cause. Only when they all become patriots and rise up for the country and people, can the road be opened.

As a war veteran I have expressed my opinions on more than one occasion to the officers and men of the national army of south Korea. In brief, they run as follows:

First, a national army means the army of the country. In other words, it is an army for safeguarding independent sovereignty and protecting the people. But, since the establishment of the government of the Republic of Korea the successive regimes have used our national army as an instrument to keep them in power. It has aimed its guns at patriotic popular movements when genocidal incidents have occurred at Pusan, Masan, Kwangju and other places and suppressed movements for democracy and reunification by use of bayonets. Although this was perpetrated by the senior officers, all the officers of the south Korean Army, including myself, should take the blame for it. Before it is too late, we should bring ourselves to our senses and make strenuous efforts to make the national army reassume its innate character so that it can enjoy the love and trust of all the people.

Secondly, the army deprived of the right of command cannot be called the army of an independent and sovereign state. There is never any doubt that those who assume the command of our army will use it at their will in the interests of their country. 33 years have passed since this precious right of command was handed over to the US general when the war started on June 25. And it is already 30 years since a ceasefire was signed on the peninsula. Still, the command of our army is in the hands of foreigners. It is quite possible to restore it by peaceful methods, that is, diplomatic negotiations. A government which cannot even conduct such negotiations cannot be regarded as a government for the people. We cannot become soldiers who make sacrifices solely in the interests of another country. Only when this precious right of command of the national army is restored, can it perform its basic mission.

Thirdly, it is known throughout the world that there are 1,000 nuclear warheads in our land.

When another war breaks out on our peninsula, the repositories of those nuclear warheads will come under fire before anything

else. And if this is continued, you, the officers and men, will be the first victims and all the people on our peninsula and in our beautiful land will suffer more than in the previous three-year-long war. The so-called nuclear umbrella is unnecessary for our nation which wants the reunification of the country in a peaceful way. If it is a strategic weapon of the US for coping with the Soviet Union it should be deployed on United States territory.

Fourthly, following the Japanese Prime Minister's recent visit to Seoul and America, a rumour is abroad concerning a US-Japan-south Korea tripartite military alliance. If this is put into reality it will provide an excuse for Japanese troops to set foot again on our country. We should do our utmost to prevent this.

Fifthly, the south Korean national army finds itself in a deplorable plight largely because, right from the time immediately after liberation to the end of the '70s, it was under the control of pro-Japanese national traitors. Now they are dead or retired because of advanced age. But the poison spread by them still remains. This must be eliminated.

Although I am a war veteran who has not many years remaining to him, I, too, am determined to devote myself to the struggle to restore the pride of a genuine national army, after your example.

Next, I would like to emphasize to the south Korean compatriots that in order to achieve the great cause of reunification, the long-cherished desire of the nation, they should rid themselves of the anti-communist idea and aim to achieve great national unity with the north Korean people.

It is said that the approval or disapproval of any idea is the basic liberty of man. In south Korea, however, "anti-communism" does not represent a thought or idea that emanates from the free will of individual people, but is in fact a strict legal commandment to be observed by everyone.

Here, we should not overlook, among other things, that the south Korean authorities pursue a double purpose by enforcing "anti-communism" as a policy for the nation.

By recourse to "anti-communism" they seek: firstly to stir up feelings against the north Korean compatriots, and perpetuate national division; and secondly, to suppress the dissident

democratic forces in south Korea and make the dictatorial regime secure.

In short, “anti-communism” serves as a synonym for anti-north Korea, a diabolical force for dividing the nation and a club for suppressing the masses.

All the facts show clearly that concocted anti-communism exerts an abominable influence.

Therefore, by freeing the people of the “anti-communist” sentiment and opposing the “anti-communist” policy a way will be paved for democracy and reunification.

Fiction is as worthless as a bubble of water before a stark fact.

Although those who believe in “anti-communism” may consider it something like a wonderful iron wall, if they open their eyes wide they will realize that they are misguided.

I remember Kim Gu’s remarks that only when the mental 38th parallel is removed, can the ground 38th parallel be eliminated. I believe that because quite a few people have the 38th parallel on their mind they do not set out bravely on the road to reunification, although they feel its necessity.

If we sincerely desire reunification and want to set out on the road to it, we should first rid ourselves of the mental “38th parallel.” Only then can we promote the reconciliation and unity of the nation and overcome the obstacles that lie in the way of reunification.

As I have said before, the north Korean people embrace communism but they give paramount consideration to the nation, whatever the circumstances. To cite a simple example, in the streets in north Korea we can see slogans which denounce America, but find none which shows hostility towards the south Korean compatriots. Irrespective of age, everyone is stiff and unbending in their attitude towards the United States and its army; however no one feels an ounce of antagonism towards the south Korean compatriots, but in fact everyone feels sympathy and affection for them.

I believe that this is favourable to achieving the rapprochement and union transcending differences in ideology and social system.

I have one more thing to say. It concerns the “threat of southward invasion.”

Looking around not only historic remains and scenic spots, but also many industrial establishments in north Korea I, who have had a long military career, felt intuitively that the north would never be the first to start a bloody war.

I think that war should not be viewed as an isolated phenomenon.

Once, Clausewitz, who is known as the founder of modern military science, pointed out that war is a special instrument of politics.

This means that war cannot be considered apart from politics.

North Korea has so far built many things and is still carrying out large-scale construction. This is aimed at attaining a high level of economic growth in order to rank among the advanced countries in the 80s.

I became convinced that the north Koreans would not commit such a folly as to see the huge wealth they had built up on the ashes of war since the armistice blown away again in the flames of another conflict.

James Fringle, an American journalist who visited north Korea, wrote in *Newsweek* of February 9, 1981 that President Kim seems not to be making a new attempt to reunify the country by force in disregard of his lifelong undertaking and the danger of the country being destroyed again.

If north Korea had any intention of invading south Korea, how could it waste such opportunities as the April 19 uprising and the October 26 incident? On the other hand, if the United States and the south Korean regime believed in the “threat of north Korean aggression in the south,” how could they mobilize the south Korean army to wage a proxy war in Viet Nam and transfer their armed forces to this frontline and concoct the December 12 coup d’etat to purge the army, when Pak Jung Hi was killed and south Korean society was thrown into chaos?

Despite the fact that north Korea has declared on many occasions that it would never invade the south and that this has been verified, south Korea has made a great fuss repeatedly about the threat of

north Korean infiltration of the south. This is aimed at instilling in the people a feeling of anti-communist confrontation with the north.

In my opinion if war breaks out in the future it will be caused not by southward aggression from the north but by northward aggression from the south.

There are innumerable facts that indicate the truth of this.

In disregard of the repeated proposals of north Korea to replace the armistice agreement with a peace treaty and in publicly announcing that the Korean peninsula was of the greatest importance in carrying out its immediate strategic military objectives, the United States keeps pouring nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction into south Korea. And every year it has conducted the “team spirit” joint military exercise with north Korea as the imaginary enemy, while persistently manoeuvring to establish a US–Japan–south Korea tripartite military alliance.

All these facts can be construed as nothing but a deliberate aggravation of the situation which is leading Korea to the brink of war.

The United States argues that the Korean war was provoked by north Korea. At the time I was in America and at first I believed this. Later, I read the speech that Dulles, the US Secretary of State made at the south Korean national assembly on the eve of June 25 and came to know the contents of secret letters exchanged between President Syngman Rhee and the United States. In this way I became aware that in fact the United States and south Korea triggered off the war.

Stressing the fact that furlough was granted to the officers and men of the south Korean army on the night before June 25 and a grand banquet was held in the officers’ club in Seoul, some people assert that the southern side could not have made the first attack, and that without doubt the north made the first inroads. However, there is indisputable proof that this was a mock drama staged by the United States on the eve of the war.

Viewed cool-headedly from a military point of view, by the year 1950 the United States had become predominant both militarily and economically, and since World War II she had emerged as the

greatest power in the world and a ringleader of the Western countries with the intention of dominating the world.

On the other hand, the north Korean regular army was only two years old at the time and its commanding officers had experience only of a guerrilla war and almost no experience of modern warfare. In addition, it could not expect the support of the Soviet Union and communist China; the former had been most seriously injured in World War II and the latter had announced the foundation of the state less than a year before.

In such circumstances, it is quite unimaginable that the north started a southward invasion first, which would have meant that it was determined to make war on the United States. So nowadays sensible Americans do not believe that north Korea provoked the war.

At any rate, it is important to prevent the reoccurrence of war in our country. The June 25 tragedy must not be repeated. Why should fellow countrymen fight each other? It can be readily imagined that if a war breaks out in the future it will inevitably become a nuclear war. Then, what will become of our nation? It is indeed gruesome thought.

The traitors in south Korea seem to set great store by the American nuclear umbrella, but this is complete stupidity. Although I am ignorant of the military installations of north Korea, if a war breaks out, will it be unable to do anything? It, too, may suffer great damage, but the nuclear bases in south Korea will be attacked by north Korea before anything else. If this happens, the United States may take Chon Doo Hwan to safety as she did with the leaders of Viet Nam and Iran, but other people will not be able to escape disaster.

So I categorically affirm once again that to resist outside forces and their stooges and stand together with the north Korean compatriots represents the road for life, a road to patriotism and for the nation.

I Advise the United States

The United States has long-standing relations with our country.

The Korea-US treaty was concluded in May 1882. So, relations have existed for a century.

This hundred year long history may be divided into periods, but how this is done may vary from person to person; I think that it can be divided largely into three stages-from 1882 to 1910, the period of Japanese imperialist occupation and from 1945 to the recent day.

It can be said that because the United States was making an overseas advance belatedly in the first stage, but was unable to directly occupy and dominate feudal Korea because of the great powers' scramble that was focussed on the Korean peninsula, it wanted to share the rights and interests in the Korean peninsula while impeding the southward advance of the Russian Empire, and so made use of Japan.

This was clearly proved by the "Katsura-Taft" agreement of 1905. As is known to all, by this agreement the United States admitted Japan's special interest in the Korean peninsula in exchange for the latter's recognition of its vested interests in the Philippines. In other words, the United States approved in advance the annexation of Korea by Japan but acquired future economic concessions in the Korean peninsula under Japanese imperialist rule.

In the second stage the United States strove to consolidate the Japanese imperialists' domination of Korea and to maintain its vested economic interests acquired before the annexation. This serves as a clear example, I think, of the fact that although it advocated the people's right of self-determination after World War I, the United States was indifferent to our people's burning desire for independence which flared up into the March First Movement.

In the third stage, the United States stationed its army in the southern part of the Korean peninsula after Japan's defeat and enforced its military government there for three years. Then, in 1948 it formed a separate government in south Korea made up of pro-Japanese traitors and pro-US elements to allow them to divide and rule the country. The United States pursued its strategic purposes through its domination of south Korea. The United States' strategy towards Korea is aimed chiefly at using the southern half of Korea as an advanced military base under the pretext that it prevents the expansion of communist forces, which is in accordance

with its world strategy since the Second World War.

Viewed in this light, the history of the century-long Korea-US relations is a history in which the United States has consistently pursued its national interests directly or indirectly, and we alone have been compelled to sacrifice ourselves.

Our nation has had to make terrible sacrifices during this hundred year period. This can be explained simply by the fact that this period was the most shameful period ever known in our nation's 5,000 year history, a period of calamity in which our nation suffered from aggression and is now suffering territorial partition.

It cannot be denied that all the calamities we have suffered were caused by US involvement and intervention or by its direct action.

It is our mistake to have had no understanding of the United States.

But ours had not always been a nation of blind fools, nor could it become so. Through the Kwangju incident the south Korean people, though belatedly, saw American policy towards Korea in its true light and came to have doubts as to whether America was our friend. At last, they have come out shouting "Yankee, go home!"

Although this may have been a surprise to the Washington authorities, it is a natural development, I believe.

Once a famous American Negro leader Malcolm said that when a slave becomes aware of being a slave, he is no longer a slave.

American policymakers must realize that the south Korean people will not remain as docile sheep for ever and obey the whip like field-mice.

Now that the south Korean people have become politically conscious, even if the United States allows the military oppressors recourse to terrorism, it will be unable to check the emergence of such patriots as Mun Bu Sik, Kim Hyon Jang, Choe Gi Sik and Pak Gwan Hyon in south Korea.

This is unpleasant for the United States. But, as long as it does not change its stand there is nothing it can do, because there is no other way for the south Korean people to survive than that of opposing the United States.

In a word, Korea–US relations have been abnormal for a hundred years and now they have reached a critical point.

I sincerely hope that the United States takes a sane look at these developments and does not repeat the same mistake as in Viet Nam.

I do not say this on impulse.

As for my own life, I fought Japan together with the allied forces on the Burma front in the Second World War, went through the June 25 war along with the US army and have now sought refuge in America. This shows that my background can be called pro-American.

I sincerely admonish the United States and demand that it should radically alter its policy towards Korea so that a good friendship and amity is established between the two countries.

Friendship and amity between nations can be established only on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. So in order to stabilize Korea–US relations and promote friendship, the United States should not try to bisect the Korean peninsula to bring the southern part under its control, but take its hands off. And it is high time to do so, I believe.

Taking a broad view, this will be honourable and favourable for the United States and beneficial to both sides. This is all the more true when we recollect that the United States once advocated the right on national self-determination.

At the same time, I suggest that one should remember how independence was achieved in the US, a British colony in 1776 and the lesson of the Civil War in the time of President Lincoln.

History flows on and times have changed. Today is the age of national independence.

The nations that groaned under the oppression of major powers have been awakened and want to become masters of their own destiny and lead an independent life.

The political map of the world shows a great change and there will be many more changes in the future.

Even some Western countries that are in league with the United States are opposed to being under its control and their aspirations to take the road of independence have become greater.

This proves that the tide of history is flowing under the banner of independence.

Why should not we Koreans join this historical current?

Our nation is a resourceful and courageous nation; from ancient times it has fought gallantly against foreign aggressors. Even in the dark period of Japanese imperialist colonial rule our nation fought bloody battles for national dignity, independence and sovereignty. The April 19 and Kwangju popular uprisings showed the righteousness and courage of the Korean people.

If the US authorities ignore the traditional independent spirit of our nation and rely on Chon Doo Hwan and the like, who are isolated from the masses, so that they fall into disgrace and are driven away, this will run counter to the “spirit of American independence” which Americans take such pride in.

To be honest, from the strategic military point of view, too, the Korean peninsula has become worthless to the United States because it is in league with Japan and its relations with communist China are improving. Nevertheless, the United States has divided the small peninsula into two and intends to maintain its control over half of it. I do not understand this.

Our people, whether they are in the north or the south, unanimously desire independent, peaceful reunification. And they wish that once our country is reunified, it will be a peace-loving, neutral country which does not join any military alliance.

Here I want to tell the Administration and people of the United States about a few facts I have confirmed through my visits to north Korea.

In the course of exchanging views with high-ranking officials from the north Korean authorities I have ascertained that they do not want to oppose unconditionally the United States and if the United States entertains goodwill towards Korea without preventing its reunification they are ready to improve their relations with it.

They have confirmed to me that they have no intention of imposing communism on south Korea and if a person with a national conscience takes power to replace the Chon Doo Hwan fascist regime and the United States displays friendly feelings towards him, they are ready to discuss the peaceful reunification of

the Korean peninsula with the United States and the southern side.

At the same time, they have said that once Korea is reunified it will never become a satellite of another country, but become a neutral state such as Switzerland, so as to maintain good relations with the United States, the USSR and all other countries. They have stressed that this is the best path for a small nation to follow because it is surrounded by large countries.

In short, the north Korean communists I met are not such “daredevils” or “warmongers” as America thinks but very realistic and rational. These people are full of ardour and will daringly resist those who violate their national sovereignty.

I related these facts, in the hope that the United States will take a broad view of the north Korean proposal for founding the “Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo” and make a positive response to it.

I believe that the century-long Korea-US relations should be reorientated and that now is the time to do so. It is often said that in the international arena there is neither eternal friendship nor eternal enmity.

Today when Korea-US relations are witnessing their one hundred and first year I would like to say without reserve that the time has come for the United States to bring to an end its defiled history and change its policy to one that is helpful to the swift reunification of our nation and think over the “honourable withdrawal of its army” in order to establish new Korea-US relations.

And the United States must not encourage the expansion of Japanese militarism and the military and political behind-the-scenes tie-up of Chon Doo Hwan and Japan.

Historically speaking, the Japanese ruling circles have the brigandish vice that according to their interests they may develop their strength with the backing of other large countries and when they become powerful, they challenge them, brandishing a sword.

I have the sincere desire that I will not see the United States having a second bitter experience of “Pearl Harbor” because it has given support to Japanese militarism.

I was told that upon assuming power Kennedy said “Time is

flowing to the daily-increasing disadvantage of America.”

In fact, the situation in America in the 60s, 70s, and 80s justifies this remark.

The United States is no longer a “super power mightiest in the world.” People simply regard it as “one of the big powers.”

In the turbulent current of the world the United States should look squarely at its true situation and the increasing consciousness of independence of the south Korean people, and should not hamper their aspirations for safeguarding their national dignity and sovereignty.

Finally I express my gratitude to the sensible politicians and public figures and honest citizens of the United States who have shown friendly feelings for our movement for democratic reunification and earnestly wish them to make every effort in the future, too, so that American policy towards Korea will be radically reorientated for the reunification of our nation and the honour of the United States itself.

I Warn Japan

I have a warning for Japan, too.

On seeing the south Korea–Japan friendship becoming closer and reaching a high level these days, I, as a war veteran who fought against Japan, cannot suppress my burning indignation.

Japan is our neighbour and has had relations with our country for a long time.

As for Japan, I, who served in the army for many years and am an ex-diplomat, think, first of all, that although we have never invaded Japan, she has been infringing on and plundering us over several hundred years.

One instance of a large-scale invasion of our country by Japan was in 1592 when Toyotomi Hideyoshi made an onslaught on our nation with a large army. Also Japan has, on more than one occasion, allowed its pirate ships to invade and pillage the areas along the south coast of our country.

In particular, in 1910 Japan occupied our country and enforced

colonial rule. This is a criminal act that can never be pardoned.

Japan, as an underdeveloped capitalist country, had been greedy for our land. It concluded the Kwanghwado Treaty in 1876, and in 1905 made Ito Hirobumi bribe the pro-Japanese ministers in the old Korean government and manipulate the Iljin Association to concoct the Ulsa Protectorate Treaty.

As a result of this our sovereignty was turned into an appendage of the rule of the Japanese imperialist Resident-General, we were deprived of independence and finally Korea was annexed by Japan.

By the way, I want to stress here the fact that Japan used to expand overseas with the backing of a larger country.

Let me cite a few examples.

In 1895, under the aegis of the United States, Japan unleashed the Sino-Japanese War and deprived China of the Liaodong peninsula, although it was returned later, and Taiwan to make them her colonies. And in 1904, with the support of Britain, she provoked the Russo-Japanese War and snatched Sakhalin south of latitude 50 degrees north and the next year forced the Korean government to sign the Ulsa Protectorate Treaty with the consent of America.

In the First World War, too, on the plea of the British-Japanese Alliance, Japan joined in the war and afterwards deprived the Chinese of Jiaozhou Bay in Shandong Province which had been under German control. In the Second World War, although she was finally defeated, at the start she strove to dominate Asia by rigging up the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” through an alliance with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

What is more hateful is that instead of getting rid of these evil practices, Japan is still spinning her old daydream of realizing “the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” again with the backing of America.

Taking encouragement from the United States the Japanese government is intensifying economic and cultural infiltration into many Asian countries under the banner of “aid,” “joint development” or “economic and technical cooperation” at the same time as drawing up a war plan to invade them. In particular, in order to invade our country again, she is extending her black talons far over south Korea.

Probably urged by America, which wants to add the finishing touches to the US–Japan–south Korea tripartite military alliance, in January this year Prime Minister Nakasone visited Seoul to grant a loan of four billion dollars to the Chon Doo Hwan regime under the name of “establishment of south Korea–Japan friendly relations.” This has hastened the building up of a military alliance.

This means that Japan is pretending to comply with America’s demand to take its share of the responsibility in not only the economic field but also in military affairs in line with its national power, but in fact she is proceeding openly towards the revitalization of militarism on the assumption of a “case of emergency on the Korean peninsula,” so I believe.

Some people say that Japan is not as she was. But as long as the socio-political structure of a country remains unchanged its foreign policy cannot be fundamentally altered.

Since the war, in Japan the big monopolies which at one time seemed to have perished, have revived to grow fat and the remnants of the militarists are now running riot, even dreaming of restoring the Tenno system.

In such a state of affairs, where can one find a change in Japan’s foreign policy?

In the past 36 years, Japan committed unpardonable crimes against our nation. Nevertheless, it has so far made no apology. In addition, it is watching for a chance to invade Korea again. This was revealed by Sawada’s reckless remark, “We cannot show our faces to our ancestors unless we rise up for a third time following in the wake of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars to take the 38th Parallel to beyond the Amnok River” and that of Shiina, “If it was Japanese imperialism which administered Taiwan, annexed Korea and dreamed of the harmony of five races in Manchuria, it was a glorious imperialism.”

The incident of perverting the textbook of Japanese history, which recently incurred an international protest, did not happen accidentally but came from the traditional aggressive stance of the Japanese government towards Korea.

I think that Prime Minister Nakasone’s comments were in the same vein when he, after finishing the talks on stabilizing relations

between south Korea and Japan in Seoul last time, said at the press conference, “if the Japanese people had seen how warmly south Koreans welcomed me, waving the flags of south Korea and Japan, they would have been deeply moved.”

He also recalled the fact that in the evening of the day when the “Residency-General” was established in Seoul, Ito Hirobumi, overwhelmed with delight, recited a stanza, “If Konishi lived in this world, how pleasant it would be for him to look up at that moon this evening.” In view of this, it is hardly likely that he, having got the Japanese flag hung out again on the Capitol Building, once the government-general building, 37 years and four months later and looking out over the streets of Seoul could make such a remark, simply with a desire for “South Korea–Japan friendship.”

To me his remark sounds nothing more than an open insult and a challenge to the Korean people who are fighting to defend national dignity and sovereignty against outside intervention and subordination.

But Japan should know one thing.

In the days of the June 25 war President Syngman Rhee said that if the Japanese army came and landed, he would cease the battle against the north and turn his guns on the Japanese, hand in hand with the north.

Doctor Rhee said this, unable to ignore our young officers who rose up on hearing that the MacArthur command was planning to hurl the Japanese “Self-Defensive Forces” onto the Korean front and so he opposed it.

As I was one of those young officers, how matters stood at the time is still fresh in my memory.

The Japanese ruling circles should clearly remember this historical fact.

The hatred of the Korean people for the remnants of the “Japanese Empire army” who are watching for a chance to invade is just as it has always been.

We Koreans distinguish the Japanese militarist forces from the honest democratic forces of Japan including the younger generation who oppose them. But we will take strong action against the remnants of the Japanese militarists who pounce upon us with

swords in their hands.

We cannot and will never forget the fact that the Japanese militarists imposed the colonial yoke upon our nation and committed thrice-cursed atrocities.

We are still experiencing harsh trials, but we are not the inferior nation that we were.

For the good of the country and the nation, our people will never remain as passive onlookers to the Japanese militarists' scheme to invade once more.

If Japan sincerely hopes to establish new Korea-Japan relations, she should cease to patronize and aid such people as Chon Doo Hwan who has been forsaken by the south Korean people and cursed by the whole nation, should not prevent our struggle for democracy in society and independent national reunification and should abandon the foolish idea of fishing in troubled waters by fanning north-south confrontation in our country.

In particular, Japan should not forget the lessons of history.

Historically, Japan has been fortunate to have had the backing of large countries. But viewed in a different light it may be more correct to say that it has history in which, under the aegis of a large country, it has sought to acquire a fortune only to meet with disaster.

Today, Japan seeks to ally itself to the United States in pursuance of their common interests to invade Asia and to cash in on it. However, Japan should know that this may cause national ruin. So Japan should follow not the road of collaborating with and kowtowing to the United States but the road of independence and democracy, not the road of military alliance and war but the road leading to neutrality and peace.

While I warn Japan in this way, I look ahead and see a bright future for her.

The remnants of Japanese militarism will be gone before long and the day will come when the aftereffects of the poisonous influence spread by them are eliminated once and for all, though it may take some time.

While having a rambling talk with young intellectuals and

leading pressmen on the occasion of declaring myself against Pak Jung Hi in Tokyo in November 1977, I pictured a bright day dawning for Japan. I told them that Japan should discard the haughtiness derived from the fact that it once dominated our nation and that the Korean nation should not feel resentful at the fact that it had experienced her oppression. This alone, I added, will make it possible for our Korean people and Japan to establish everlasting equal and reciprocal friendly relations. They agreed with me.

Conclusion

I, as a war veteran who has spent more than half of his life as a soldier, cannot contain my feelings of self-accusation and remorse when making a tour of the country, which remains divided.

Everyone may follow the road of his choice. But, just as a man cannot choose his parents before birth, so we cannot be free from and ignore the historical reality which has developed within the community bound together by a common fate, which is called the nation.

Now I have before me too short a road in comparison with the one that I have travelled. So, in a flurried frame of mind I only wish to do my bit on the road to reunification, our supreme national task.

I think that it is my good fortune that although I once found myself in the dark waters of misguided history in the southern half of the country, I have come, though belatedly, to join the struggle for reunification. I want to return to the road which I had followed led by my father in my childhood, bearing the grudge of national ruin, visualizing the day of reunification when our fellow countrymen will embrace each other and dance for joy.

Certainly the day will come, the day of national reunification will definitely come.

As a poor writer I want in this book to describe my recollections and new awakening and atone for my sins to my parents and the great pioneers. I hope this will be helpful even a little to the younger generation who will bear the destiny of our nation on their shoulders.

A Brief Biography of the Author

He was born on September 17, 1914.

In 1921, at the age of seven, he followed his father to China to seek refuge there and take part in the independence movement.

His father Choe Dong O took part in the March 1, 1919 independence uprising, suffered two years' imprisonment and sought refuge in China after his release from prison. He was active as a leading member of the Provisional Government of Korea in Shanghai. After liberation he took part in the Right-Left cooperation movement and, together with Kim Gu and Kim Gyu Sik, attended the north-south consultative conference held in Pyongyang in April 1948.

In 1936 the author graduated with honours from the Military Academy in Nanjing, China and fought in the anti-Japanese war, serving in the Chinese army. In 1945 when the Japanese army was defeated, he was serving as a staff officer and battalion commander of the 38th Division of the Chinese army in the northern part of Burma, and returned in triumph to Kwangdong Province in southern China. He accepted the surrender of the Japanese army there and disarmed it. He freed more than 3,000 compatriots who had been press-ganged into the Japanese army and returned home at their head in May of the following year.

Between 1947 and 1956 he was commander of the Second Regiment, the president of the military academy and commander of the 3rd, 8th and 11th Divisions of the south Korean army.

He attended the Panmunjom armistice talks as a representative of the south Korean army. He walked out of the talks on May 25, 1953 because of dissension from the US delegates. He served as

commander of the First Corps of the south Korean army and in May 1956 was placed on the reserve list as a lieutenant general.

Between 1956 and 1961 he was ambassador to the Vietnamese Republic (south Viet Nam) and concurrently an envoy to Thailand.

He was foreign minister between 1961 and 1963 and attended the 16th and 17th Sessions of the UN General Assembly as the head of the south Korean delegation.

He was ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Federal Republic of Germany between 1963 and 1967. He was also patriarch of the Chondoist faith and concurrently a councillor to the Board for National Unification, chairman of the South Korean Religious Council and chairman of the south Korean side for the South Korea–Japan Religionists Council.

He resided in the US since February 1976.

On November 18, 1977, he declared his support for the movement to overthrow the south Korean dictatorial regime and for democracy in Tokyo. He visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1980. He visited Pyongyang again for the celebrations of the 70th birthday of President Kim Il Sung on April 15, 1982.

His works: *The Anti-Japanese Bloody War Fought in Burma*, *My Experience of Panmunjom*, *Where Is the Second Panmunjom Going?* (dealing with the north–south Viet Nam armistice talks held in Paris); these volumes appear in Korean, Chinese and English versions.

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